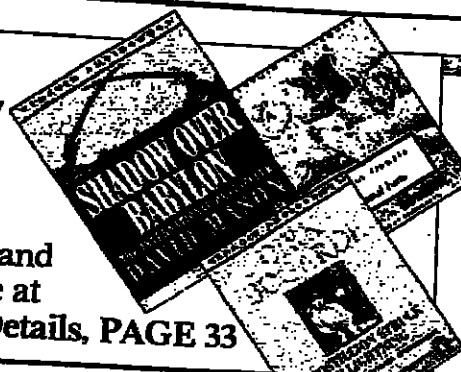


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Frocks without shocks

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Monster fun

Lego leads dinosaurs into the age of computers INTERFACE



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Selection seen as vote-winner

Major goes into battle over schools

By Philip Webster and John O'Leary

JOHN MAJOR will today put education at the heart of the general election battle when he embraces the expansion of selection into a wide range of state secondary schools.

The Prime Minister has already spelt out his desire to see many more of the country's 1,100 grant-maintained schools apply for the right to introduce selection. Now he hopes that church, local authority comprehensives and specialist schools will be encouraged by Gillian Shephard's proposals to allow schools to select 15 per cent of their pupils without seeking government approval.

Mr Major will tell the Social Market Foundation in London: "We've created a spectrum of schools. A spectrum that reflects the fact that every child is different. Grant-maintained schools, specialist schools, church schools, city technology colleges, and grammar schools.

"We are currently considering how to increase that rich variety with more selective schools... selective schools represent an important part of the rich spectrum of schools which has become one of the great legacies of the Government's education policies."

Earlier this month, The Times disclosed that the Downing Street policy unit was studying plans to set up privately-funded grammar schools in every large town.

Today's speech will make plain that he wants the principle of selection extended to a wide range of state schools.

Mr Major is, however, determined to avoid a return to the grammar-secondary modern divide where four out of five pupils were condemned to low-status institutions with no hope of improvement. He appears to want to recast policy to allow more schools to select enough for a "fast stream" that will bring a general raising of standards.

Mr Major's latest foray into the education debate reflects a belief that a revival of the grammar school tradition is a potential vote-winner and a way to throw Tony Blair on the defensive in the wake of the Harriet Harman affair. Ms Harman infuriated Labour MPs by deciding to send her son to a state grammar school several miles from her home, but Tory policy-makers have noted that she also attracted a great of parental support.

Under Tony Blair, Labour has been softening its hostility to grant-maintained schools — Mr Blair sends his son to one and to grammar schools. The policy of abolishing the remaining 161 grammar schools has been replaced by one of allowing parents to decide.

Mr Major's remarks today will be seen as paving the way for a stronger Tory commitment to grammar schools, but Number 10's enthusiasm for a revival of the selection is causing tensions with Mrs Shephard's Education Department. Mrs Shephard has stated her opposition to a wholesale return to the 11-plus.

Grant-maintained schools have shown a marked reluctance to embrace the grammar school ethos, despite encouragement from Mr Major last autumn. Only two comprehensives have returned to their fully selective roots after leaving local authority control and another has applied to Mrs Shephard for permission to follow suit, but officials at the Grant Maintained Schools Centre said there was little evidence of pent-up demand from comprehensives to become grammar schools.

More schools have, however, taken the opportunity to become partially selective. Five have been allowed to choose half their pupils on academic ability and another 32 are introducing a selective stream in an otherwise comprehensive intake.

Today's speech is intended to highlight the Tory election theme of choice and opportunity. It comes on the day the Cabinet meets in political session to plan summer campaigning and to prepare for the crucial central council meeting at Harrogate at the end of next week.



Michael Swain was operated on yesterday after his desperate fight to keep off a seven-stone dog

Boy scarred for life in attack by Cruft's bull-mastiff

By Paul Wilkinson and Michael Horsnell

A BOY of eight has been scarred for life after being attacked by a neighbour's bull-mastiff. The pedigree dog, which had won awards and competed at Cruft's, was later destroyed at its owner's request.

Michael Swain suffered serious head injuries as he collected a football from the house next door in Bradford, West Yorkshire. As the owner opened the door the dog, which weighed about seven stone, burst out and seized the child by the head.

Plastic surgeons at Bradford Royal Infirmary carried out a 90-minute operation yesterday to stitch up both Michael's cheeks and left lower eye-lid, but they believe he will be permanently marked. His condition was said to be comfortable. His family believe that the boy's spectacles prevented the dog's teeth from damaging his sight.

Casper, the six-year-old dog whose pedigree name was Marquis of Manville, had previously attacked Michael's mother, Sonya. It bit her on the leg three years ago, shortly after its owners moved in next door. She needed hospital treatment but did not report the incident because she did not want to upset her new neighbours.

Mrs Swain, 35, who spent the night at her son's bedside, said yesterday: "The bandages were keeping his face together. He said he saw the dog coming towards him out of the door. He turned to run away but the dog jumped on his back and dragged him down. He rolled over to kick and punch the dog off but it sank its fangs into his face."

"The owner's wife was tearing the fur off its back to get him off and Michael managed to stagger back into our drive. He has been in a lot of pain but he is being very brave. He managed to joke before going into surgery."

Before the attack, Michael had been playing soccer with his brother Joseph, five, in the drive of the family's semi-detached house. The dog's owner, Tony Oxley, saw them kick the ball over his fence and waved from his window for Michael to collect it. But when he opened his door to speak to him the dog leapt on the child.

Michael's father, Graham, 37, heard Joseph screaming. He said: "I realised straight away it was the dog. I rushed outside but couldn't see anything at first, but then I saw Michael on the ground. When I lifted him up the skin from his

Continued on page 2, col 4

Dogs of war, leading article, page 19

Lloyd's names secure £200m

More than 1,000 Lloyd's names, including Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade, celebrated "a notable victory" that should secure up to £200 million in damages in their High Court battle to recover multimillion pound losses on the catastrophe reinsurance market. A judge ruled that members of Rose Thomson Young, the syndicate worst hit by the Piper Alpha North Sea oil platform disaster, were entitled to damages. Page 25

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Taiwan fears Peking murder plot to throw poll into chaos

From David Watts and Jonathan Murky in Taipei

TAIWAN'S security services fear a Chinese plot to assassinate a candidate in Saturday's presidential elections and have surrounded each one with bodyguards.

According to a senior government official, Taipei has received information that seven mainland operatives travelling via the United States are on their way to Taipei to kill one of the candidates. Under Taiwan's electoral law, the death of a candidate in a presidential race would abort the election, thus producing political chaos.

Such an event would provide Peking with proof that democratic elections are producing chaos, an allegation also aimed at Hong Kong. The leader of the opposition Progressive Democratic Party, Peng Min-ming, went further last night and claimed that the

mainland, which hates his advocacy of independence, had put a £3.3 million price on his head.

That these threats are taken seriously in Taiwan was plain at the final election press conference of Lin Yang-kang and Hau Pei-tsun, the presidential and vice-presidential candidates of the opposition New Party. The two men were expelled from the ruling Kuomintang last year and are now involved in a bitter ideological feud with their old Nationalist colleagues as to who represents best the legacy of Sun Yat-sen, the Kuomintang founder. They accuse President Lee Teng-hui, and America, of provoking discord with China.

The room was surrounded by armed police and when the candidates left, the guards pressed closely around them.

An official said she had never seen such protection before except for high-ranking foreign guests.

Mr Lin, a former high official of the ruling Kuomintang, and Mr Hau, a retired general with a weathered expressionless face, rang the changes on political abuse of President Lee.

Mr Lin's most sensational charge was that in 1947 the President, who had returned from schooling in Japan, joined the Communist Party. "We have documentary proof of this," he said.

Mr Lee's headquarters branded the accusation a lie, asking how a former member of the Communist Party, which is outlawed in Taiwan, could have risen to become President.

Warning for China, page 12

Labour peer changes tack on TV Bill

The Government avoided another humiliating Lords defeat last night when Labour suddenly withdrew a bid to safeguard highlights of many big sporting events for terrestrial channels.

Lord Howell, the former Labour sports minister, stunned peers during the Broadcasting Bill when he withdrew his amendment to force broadcasters to share out highlights and radio access. He opted, instead, to call for a statutory duty on the Sports Council to draw up a voluntary code of conduct on highlights.

Clarke under fire

Kenneth Clarke, who is at the centre of the Cabinet battle over a referendum on Europe, faced a call for his resignation from Patrick Minford, a member of his panel of Treasury advisers. Page 2

Couch potatoes told to spring clean their way to fitness

By Jeremy Laurance, Health Correspondent

ANOTHER shibboleth of healthy living fell yesterday as the Government dropped advice to exercise vigorously for 20 minutes three times a week.

In place of exhortations to take up squash or jogging, ministers have opted for a gentler strategy aimed at getting couch potatoes onto their feet. However, the three year, £9 million campaign which was launched yesterday, will seek to persuade people to undertake moderate activity for 30 minutes a day five times a week.

Examples given include walking the dog — briskly — heavy do-it-yourself (such as mixing cement) and spring cleaning. Officials claimed this will be easier and more enjoyable than other forms of exercise.

It is the second time in three months that ministers have



overturned long-cherished axioms of the health fraternity. Last Christmas Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, relaxed the "safer limits on alcohol consumption which had held sway for more than a decade. Some experts believe the official advice to cut the

level of fat in the diet will be the next to go, after two decades in which studies have failed to show any impact of a reduction in fat consumption on cholesterol levels or heart disease rates.

Launching the physical activity campaign yesterday, Baroness Cumberlege, the junior Health Minister, said the aim was to counter the myth that being active meant being sporty.

Describing herself as the "bicycling baroness," Lady Cumberlege, 53, said exercise need not involve a "grim, muscle snapping regime." She said she kept fit chasing cows on the family farm. "When they get out, they move extremely fast."

Research shows that six out of ten men and seven out of ten women spend too much time sitting around.



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Banalities flying at 3 o'clock. Scramble!

Let's have a short one, Miss Boothroyd demanded. "Rupert Allason!" In fact Mr Allason (C, Torbay) is quite tall, but Madam Speaker was referring to the length of his question. She was confident he would be brief. He did his best, for few dare risk Miss Boothroyd's wrath. She has been growing increasingly angry in recent weeks at the way MPs and ministers are turning both questions and answers into speeches.

She is not alone. Watching Questions to the Social Security Secretary yesterday, followed by Prime Minister's Questions, your sketchwriter began a flight of fancy. The news had featured reports of a

microchip which, for the cost of about 60p, can be incorporated into television sets. It enables the set to respond to broadcast signals which trigger a "scrambling" device whenever anything potentially offensive appears in a programme.

Could this chip be introduced into the Commons sound transmission system? The benefits are obvious. The TV chip, apparently, can scramble scenes of sex or violence. Sadly these are rare in the Commons chamber so the chip would not be needed here. But there is much else to offend the viewer, and this the chip could scramble. I envisage ten categories of chip-vulnerable material.



MATTHEW PARRIS
POLITICAL SKETCH

First, probity. This sketch proposes that any question or answer which lasts longer than 15 seconds should be automatically stopped as the speaker goes into overtime. MPs unable to speak briefly would be stopped from speaking at all.

Second, risibility. With perfectly straight faces politicians seem able to utter propositions which are quite simply monstrous. Labour's chief social security spokesman, Chris Smith, said that "one in three children today live in poverty,

whereas it was one in ten in 1979". Scramble!

Third, banality. Yesterday Nigel Waterson (C, Eastbourne), wearing a large daffodil, asked whether it was not the case that under this Government inward investment into Britain had reached a splendid level, making us "the enterprise centre of Europe". The daffodil should have warned us. Scramble!

Fourth, sycophancy. The Social Security Secretary, Peter Lilley, yesterday told his backbench admirer, Barry

Field (C, Isle of Wight), that if the choice of areas for departmental pilot schemes was based "on the diligence of their MP", then the Isle of Wight would win every time. Scramble!

Fifth, juvenility. As the junior minister Roger Evans told Labour MPs yesterday that their plans "to nationalise pensions" were "a nightmare", Tory backbenchers shrieked "Nightmare, nightmare, nightmare" like banshees. Scramble!

Sixth, mendacity. One Labour backbencher told the PM (and the cameras) yesterday that "eight million people have lost their jobs since the last election". Although technically true, the MP's statement was

highly misleading. Scramble!

Seventh, vanity. Did you see Michael Heseltine's hair yesterday? Scramble!

Eighth, fatuity. John Redwood, for instance, asking the PM whether he will "overthrow" judgments of the European Court. Scramble!

Ninth, vulgarity. Happily, there were no questions yesterday from Tony Banks (Lab, Newham NW).

Tenth, incivility. Do you need examples?

But readers, a doubt creeps in. If this new chip works, and every Commons intervention which is either prolix, risible, sycophantic, banal, juvenile, mendacious, vain, fatuous, vulgar or unedifying is scrambled, what will be left?

Judges refuse appeal for Rosemary West

Rosemary West was yesterday refused permission to appeal against her conviction for the murder of ten girls and young women. After a day and a half of legal argument the Court of Appeal took just 15 minutes to rule that there were no grounds on which West, 42, could argue that she was wrongly convicted in November.

West, who chose to stay at Durham prison during the hearing, was told of the decision in a telephone call from Leo Gostley, her solicitor. He said: "This is the end of the line unless we find new evidence. I don't think my client will be particularly surprised or disappointed by the result. I think she'll take it well, with a certain amount of stoicism." Lord Taylor of Gostford, the Lord Chief Justice, who was sitting with Mr Justice Mitchell and Mr Justice Newman, will give details of the court's decision next week.

'Unsafe' sex was rape

A painter and decorator was jailed for four years yesterday after being convicted of rape on the ground that he forced prostitutes to have unprotected sex. Mr Justice Latham told Greenville Shaw at Nottingham Crown Court: "That is as much rape as if you had sexual intercourse with any other girl or woman without their consent." Shaw, 48, from Skegness, Lincolnshire, denied raping the prostitutes he picked up in Sheffield and Nottingham from 1984 to 1990.

Boy, 14, on gun charges

A 14-year-old boy arrested in connection with the theft of guns from a former soldier's home was charged with firearms and burglary offences last night and will appear in court today. Two rifles and two handguns were taken from the home of Peter Preston, 67, in Chalfont St Peter, Buckinghamshire, on Friday. Police have recovered three of the weapons but a fourth, a handgun, is still missing. A 16-year-old has also been questioned.

£500,000 for patient

A patient who walked out of a mental hospital and threw herself from a window was awarded £495,799 damages by the High Court yesterday. Teresa Smith, 32, lost the use of her legs after falling 20ft. Miss Smith, of Leytonstone, east London, who had a history of trying to throw herself out of windows, had voluntarily gone to the police in 1992 and been detained in hospital under the Mental Health Act. Waltham Forest Health Authority admitted liability.

CSA to pay for delays

The Child Support Agency is to start paying interest on late payments it sends to parents looking after children. The payments affect 600 families who have waited more than 28 days for money deducted from absent parents, the Department of Social Security said. The interest totals £10,500, or an average of £11.50 for each case. The new rule will apply to all maintenance payments received by the agency since April 1 last year.

Dog ban for vet

A former Ministry of Agriculture research vet who kept 100 dogs in appalling conditions at an illegal puppy farm was yesterday banned from owning and breeding dogs for seven years by magistrates at Farnham, Surrey. Dr Helen Hein, 68, of Guildford, had originally denied 19 charges brought by the RSPCA, of causing unnecessary suffering to the dogs. Yesterday she admitted eight charges and another of breeding and selling dogs without a licence.

Opening night put back

Sir Cameron Mackintosh has postponed the opening of his £3.5 million musical *Matin Guerre* at the Prince Edward Theatre in London. The show was due to open in June, but Sir Cameron has added a four-week workshop before the full rehearsals "to develop the special choreographic style of the production". Ticket-holders for cancelled performances will be given priority for the reallocation of their tickets or be reimbursed.

New light on lamp lady

Florence Nightingale took the libido-suppressing drug bromide, it has emerged in a rediscovered letter from 1887. The letter from Nightingale was addressed to a leading surgeon of the time, Lauder Brunton, and is expected to fetch up to £300 at the auction. The letter also mentions a seizure with a Swedish masseur. It was found in the home of Goff Bowler, of Basford, Staffordshire, a former antiques dealer who died in January.

Scout saves brother

A Scout saved his brother from bleeding to death from a severed artery in his wrist by making a tourniquet from tea towels and dishcloths. Ewan Sutherland, 14, was playing at the boys' home in Preston, Tynes & Wear, when Robin, 15, put his hand through a glass door. Using a tip from BBC's 999, Ewan staunches the blood flow and telephoned for an ambulance. He is being considered for a bravery award.

TV role for young lover

The Turkish waiter who "married" a 13-year-old Essex girl is to be paid almost £6,000 to play himself in a four-part television series about their relationship. Musa Komegat, 18, said he was paid by the Turkish channel ATV, which will broadcast the series next month. His "bride", Sarah Cook, who is now back in Braine, will be played by a Turkish girl said to look like her.

'Wise man' wishes Clarke would resign over Europe

By NICHOLAS WOOD, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT



Newton: retiring soon

Water chief admits trouble with leaks

By PAUL WILKINSON

THE outgoing chief of Yorkshire Water admitted yesterday that its leakage detection has been inadequate, but denied that the company had deliberately attempted to mislead its customers over water losses.

Trevor Newton, the company's managing director, who is to take early retirement, told the inquiry in Leeds into its handling of last year's drought crisis: "The capability of water companies in assessing leakages has been grossly overestimated. That's the case with YW. I freely accept that."

At one time it lost up to a third of its total output. Now it was nearly down to a quarter and the company hoped to reduce that to a fifth, which it believed was the lowest economically viable target. Mr Newton said new technology meant water flow was now measured every 15 minutes and leaks detected more easily.

Mr Newton denied telling a customer that the leakage target was 15 per cent.

Yorkshire Water became embroiled in another row with Bradford council yesterday after claims that it called for all new houses to be built with showers instead of baths. But a Yorkshire Water spokesman denied making the suggestion.

KENNETH CLARKE, the minister at the centre of the Cabinet battle over a referendum on Europe, faced a call for his resignation last night from a member of his panel of independent Treasury economic advisers.

Patrick Minford, one of the "six wise men", told a Confederation of British Industry conference in Birmingham: "I hope he does resign [over Europe]. We might get some sense in his place."

Mr Minford, Professor of Applied Economics at Liverpool University, criticised the Chancellor for being far too cautious over interest rates and claimed that he would miss his target of 3 per cent growth this year.

The latest assault on the Chancellor — the subject of persistent speculation at Westminster that he might resign if the Cabinet backs a referendum on a single currency — came as he was half way through a ten-day visit to South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Close associates of the Chancellor yesterday dis-

missed suggestions that Mr Clarke regarded it as a resignation matter. They indicated that the Chancellor's tough stance had already paid dividends by stopping John Major from announcing a plebiscite two weeks ago and by forcing the Cabinet to confront the implications of such a move, such as collective responsibility.

Treasury officials predicted that Mr Clarke would shrug off Professor Minford's side-swipe, saying the academic had made similar remarks before and that his criticisms of economic policy were well known.

Mr Clarke's absence abroad and Malcolm Rifkind's planned visit to eastern Europe next week with the Queen are holding up Cabinet consideration of the referendum question. Mr Major could be forced to postpone an announcement until just before Easter because he will not be able to assemble the full Cabinet until that time.

Well-placed sources indicated that the Prime Minister

would probably want his key ministers present before finalising his stance on the issue. This timetable would mean that Mr Major would go to the opening of the inter-governmental conference (IGC) in Turin at the end of the month and address Tory activists in Harrogate on March 30 without having settled the referendum question.

The prospect of a delay loomed as Mr Major sought to placate Euro-sceptic Tories by underlining his determination to reform the European Court of Justice at the IGC.

In the Commons, the Prime Minister was pressed by backbenchers, including John Redwood, who challenged him for the leadership last summer, to rein in the powers of the court, which most recently infuriated Conservatives by upholding EU proposals for a maximum 48-hour working week. Mr Major said the Government would seek improvements at the forthcoming IGC.

Nicholas Budgeton, page 18
Letters, page 19



Patrick Minford: hopes for a sensible replacement to Kenneth Clarke as Chancellor of the Exchequer

Continent unites against football hooligans

FROM CHARLES BREMNER IN BRUSSELS

BRITAIN yesterday secured backing from its European partners for a combined police operation to track down hooligans and keep them away from trouble at the European Championships.

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, set out a tough scheme for defusing the threat of football violence this summer at a Brussels meeting

where he also gave backing to a joint European stance against racism and xenophobia. Mr Howard ended four months of government resistance to the stance after ensuring that Britain would not be forced to follow continental states with legislation to outlaw the mere act of uttering racist ideas, such as denying the Holocaust.

Interior Ministers from the other 14 EU states agreed to Britain's call for intensive

intelligence-gathering on likely hooligans ahead of the Euro 96 competition. Millions of fans are expected to travel to Britain for the matches. The scheme, which builds on existing data-exchanges, will keep track of known troublemakers with information such as transport arrangements and hotel bookings.

European police officers are to be stationed with British forces, whose operation is being directed by Malcolm

George, assistant chief constable of Greater Manchester Police. They will have two new computer systems linked to Epicentre, the European Police Information Centre. European officers will also be assigned to travel with fans.

The compromise on EU joint action against racism and xenophobia allows Britain to limit action against the perpetrators of racist speech to occasions when it is "carried out with the intention of

stirring up racial hatred or is likely to do so". If applied, British officials had argued, the EU's laws would require police to take action, for example, against Salman Rushdie whose *Satanic Verses* is deemed blasphemous by Muslim authorities.

The only new legislation required will be a law, already being drafted, to enable police to seize racist or religiously inflammatory literature produced for distribution abroad.

Blair calls for tougher laws on the issue of gun licences

By JAMES LANDALE AND GILLIAN BOWDITCH

GUN OWNERS should face tougher hurdles before being issued with a firearms certificate, Tony Blair said yesterday.

In his first firm policy recommendation since the Dunblane massacre, the Labour leader said gun owners should have to prove why they should be issued with a certificate. At present the burden of proof lies with the police, who have to prove why a certificate should not be issued.

The move came as John Major opened the way for cross-party talks on tighter gun controls. The Prime Minister said the views of the

opposition parties would be welcomed after Mr Blair demanded that the Government's review should proceed on an all-party basis.

The funerals of six of the children killed in the Dunblane massacre were held yesterday. Traffic came to a standstill in the city and shops closed. Services for David Kerr, Melissa Currie, Charlotte Dunn, Megan Turner and Hannah Scott were held at Dunblane Cathedral and the Roman Catholic Church of the Holy Family. No details of Sophie North's funeral were released.

Four more children will be buried tomorrow and the funeral of their teacher, Gwenne Mayor, will be on Thursday at the cathedral.

A spokesman for the Crown Office confirmed that the body of Thomas Hamilton, the killer, had been released by the Procurator Fiscal's office in Stirling after the completion of post-mortem examinations. Police refused to confirm or deny reports that the body was taken to Glasgow for cremation last night in a secret ceremony with no mourners or flowers.

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Media, page 23

Dog savages boy

Continued from page 1

right cheek flopped down like an envelope. I could see the bare bone of his skull and his teeth through the wound. His face was like a side of beef, dripping blood everywhere. The dog had bitten big gouges out of his face.

"His jumper had been torn to shreds and his back was like a pepper pot with all the teeth marks. His eyes were rolling in his head."

"There is no need to keep a large dog like that in a residential area where children like to play... It is a horrendous dog. It is like a small horse. I want the Government to stop people owning dogs like this. We have got to protect our children. It was a totally unprovoked attack."

He said of his son's spectacles: "We always struggle to get him to wear them, but he

hardly ever puts them on because he doesn't like them." Mr Oxley broke down in tears when asked about the incident. He said: "I am absolutely devastated and heartbroken to lose Caspar but that's nothing to the feeling I have for Michael and his family. I'm so sorry about what has happened. I want to apologise to his family in person, but I want to choose the right time to do that."

"I've been everywhere with my dog. He's won loads of cups and awards up and down the country and I've even taken him to Crufts."

West Yorkshire police said the Crown Prosecution Service would decide on whether a charge of possessing a dog which was dangerously out of control.

Leading article, page 19

**ALMOST 50%* OF YOU
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A recent MOR* poll has shown that a lot of people think they've got mortgage protection, when in fact they haven't.

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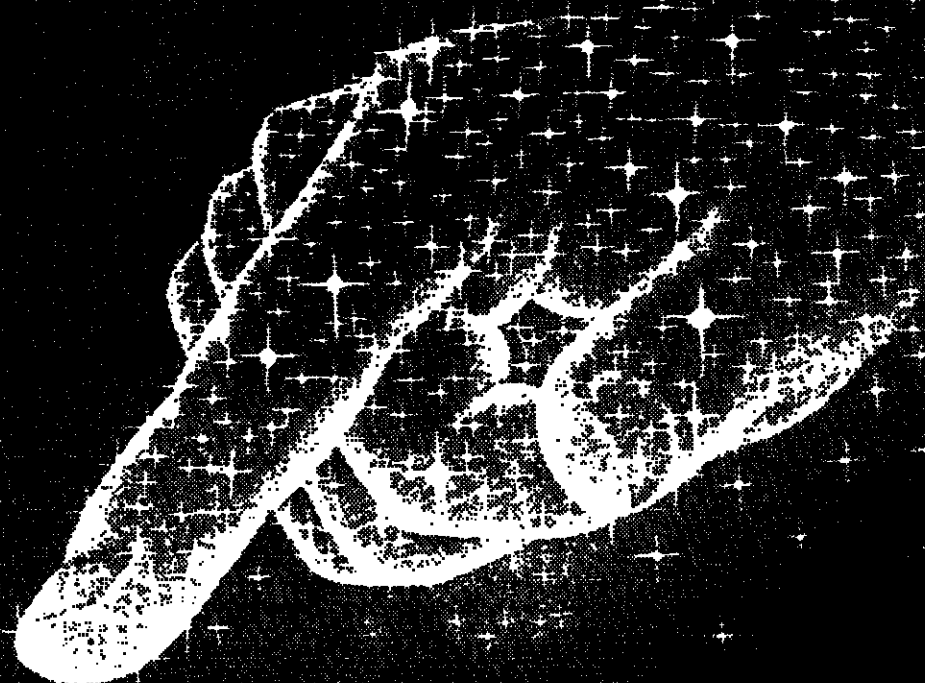
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heavily in the album, and they don't do it for the first time. The album is a collection of songs that the band has been working on for a long time, and it's a great example of their songwriting and production skills.

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Maestro sues CD label to save Mahler's soul

REPORTS BY BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS AND DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

CLAUDIO ABBADO, the artistic director of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, has filed a lawsuit against his record company in the Paris High Court, claiming that a compact disc compiled using excerpts from Gustav Mahler's symphonies has reduced his work to mere soundbites.

The conductor's lawyers say Deutsche Grammophon infringed the conductor's copyright and damaged the artistic integrity of the music by extracting slow movements from four Mahler symphonies, originally recorded in their entirety by Abbado with different orchestras at varying times. The court yesterday postponed a hearing in the dispute until April 2.

The case brings to a head the long-running battle between those who oppose the

packaging of selected "excerpts" from great musical compositions, and those who argue that "compilation" albums have vastly increased the audience and market for classical music.

The CD, entitled *Adagio* and bringing together movements from Mahler's Third, Fourth, Fifth and Sixth symphonies, was released last October and distributed by Polygram.

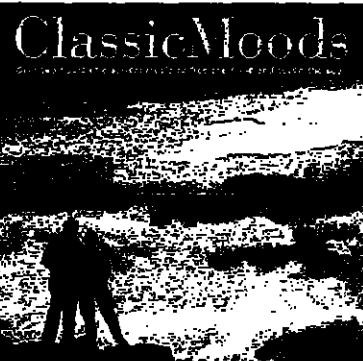
The conductor's lawsuit calls for the CD to be withdrawn from music shops and all copies destroyed. Two of the movements are performed by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, one by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra and one by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The longest excerpt lasts 26 minutes.

The market for compilation

albums, spearheaded by opera stars such as Luciano Pavarotti, has grown hugely in recent years and the Top Twenty best-selling classic music albums are almost all compilations.

Deutsche Grammophon, which is currently re-recording all Mahler's symphonies in Paris with Abbado, argues that such expensive projects can best be financed by packaging classical "greatest hits" for the mass market.

Some classical-music lovers, however, point out that the taste for compilation albums is creating a listening public used to hearing short musical extracts — such as the adagio from Mahler's Fifth Symphony, made popular by its use in the film *Death in Venice* — rather than entire works which the composer



Claudio Abbado, above. The compilation CD *Classic Moods* tops the charts

Easy listeners go for 'greatest hits'

COMPILATION albums feature so heavily in the classical music charts that they account for five of this week's top ten albums. All the main record companies are aiming at a big market for pieces heard in a film or television commercial.

Most of the companies are picking repertoire to fit "concepts". Warner Classics has come up with themes such as *Classic Weepies* and *Sensual Classics* to ensure that music really was going to be the food of love. It commissioned six couples to test 50 "sexy" tracks under the bedsheets.

The latest charts are topped by *Classic Moods*, a Decca double-album featuring 32 tracks. It has occupied the No 1 slot

since January, already selling 100,000 copies in Britain. Every track is listed by composer, with a mention of any film in which it was featured.

The sleeve notes describe the works in terms that some might find unfamiliar. The adagio from Schubert's String Quintet (Takes Quartet) is said to feature "in many celebrities' Desert Island Discs, and was used as the melancholy ending to the film *Carrington* and in British Telecom advertising".

Barber's Adagio for Strings (Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, 1992): "Possibly one of the most emotional pieces of classical music ever written, the Adagio... has made many very public appearances — at the funeral of President

Kennedy, in the films *Platoon* and *The Elephant Man*..."

Peter Russell, managing director of Polygram Classics, said there was a huge market of classical-music buyers who did not want complete works. "They want recognisable tunes, melodies used in films and all sorts of other outlets which are very familiar," *Classic Moods*, he said, was typical of many albums. The same pieces feature on several compilation recordings.

James Jolly, editor of the monthly magazine *Gramophone*, said of the compilations: "It's the greatest hits wrapped up under a glossy name. They are servicing a different market. One can't be critical of them for that."



Jamie Shore keeping fit before his operation: "It's the one hope I've got of saving my career"

Medical culture could resurrect football career

By KATE ALDERSON

AN INJURED footballer's career may be saved by a pioneering operation to replace damaged cartilage in his knee. His own cells, grown in culture in an American laboratory, will be used.

Jamie Shore, 18, a youth team professional for Norwich City and a former England under-16 international, thought his career was over after a serious injury to his right knee. He has been unable to play for 18 months.

An operation in ten days' time at the NHS Centre for Sports Injury in Leighton Hospital, Crewe, may see Jamie playing professional football again within a year.

In January a tiny amount of Jamie's cartilage was taken from his knee and sent to the Genzyme Tissue Repair laboratories in Massachusetts, where the 10,000 or so cells were regenerated into a tissue containing 16 million cells. At the end of this month the cells will be flown back to Crewe

and implanted into the footballer's knee to make the new lining.

Dai Rees, consultant orthopaedic surgeon and director of the NHS Centre for Sports Injury, is pioneering the technique in Britain.

He said: "The implications for the application of this technology are immense. It has taken off in the US and Scandinavia but there will need to be major clinical trials here to assess the implications."

Jamie, a graduate of the Football Association's School of Excellence in Lillleshall, Shropshire, has been told by Mr Rees that he could be playing football again within a year. His family is helping him to pay the \$10,000 for the American cell-development process.

Speaking yesterday from his home in Bristol he said: "I'm not apprehensive at all because I've got nothing to lose. This is the one hope I've got of saving my career and I'm very grateful for it."

Technique that gives patients a kick

By NIGEL HAWKES

THE technique of repairing knees with cells cultured from the patient's cartilage was developed at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden by Lars Peterson, an orthopaedic surgeon.

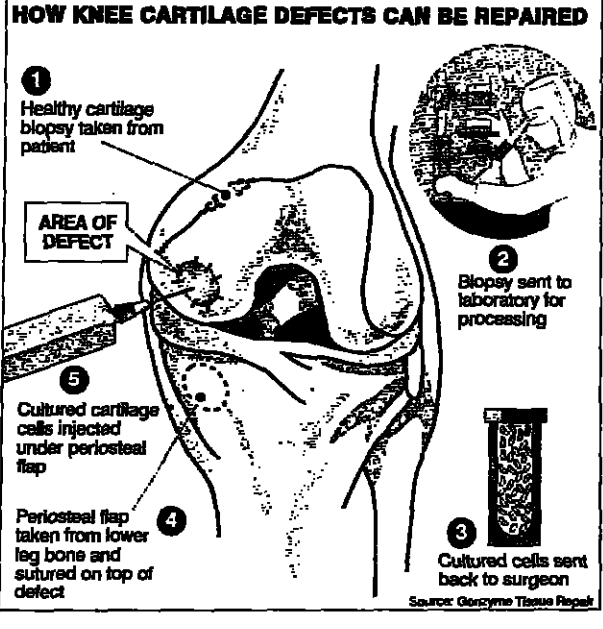
At a meeting of American orthopaedic surgeons in Atlanta three weeks ago, he reported that he had treated 251 patients using the method. Among those treated at least two years ago, he said, more than 80 per cent had shown long-term benefits.

The procedure works well on cartilage defects of the femoral condyle — the part of the knee formed by the end of the thigh bone — and in defects of the knee cap, he said.

After bone, cartilage is the

most important structural tissue of the body. It lines the joints, absorbs stresses and allows smooth movement. However, joint cartilage does not regenerate, and once damaged — often in a sports injury — the friction in the joint increases, widening the area of damage and causing severe pain.

Mr Peterson's technique, commercialised by Genzyme Tissue Repair of Cambridge, Massachusetts, involves removing healthy cartilage cells, multiplying them in culture, and then replacing them in the damaged joint. A small flap of pericostal tissue, the material that forms a sheath over the bones, is used as a flap over the cells to keep them in place. Patients have shown continued improvement as time passes.



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Carey calls on MPs to give poor a chance

THE Archbishop of Canterbury called for politicians to move away from confrontation to address the suffering caused by poverty.

"I believe in the enterprise society and wealth creation... I also believe in the stakeholder society but both will be unsatisfactory if people are excluded from society," Dr George Carey said at a conference in London. The conference was one of a series organised by Church Action on Poverty to give a platform to the underprivileged so they could present their needs to people in power at a national level.

Jamie Phillips, 17, from Preston, spoke of life in local authority care and of her fear of being thrown out to live on £35 a week. "Peter Lilley thinks young people leave home for the fun of it," she said.

"My life has been one of abuse and neglect, without love. I just wish that people would give us a chance and treat us with respect."



George Carey talks to "Lisa", an impoverished woman who became a prostitute

Barrister turns Mr Bean to barter his legal skills

By FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

A BARRISTER with a liking for mung beans is offering his advocacy skills in exchange for other services if people cannot obtain legal aid.

Peter Gray, a barrister in Canterbury, has advertised via Link, a lawyers' Internet service, offering to do legal work through his local trading co-operative. The Canterbury local exchange trading system (Lets), is one of about 300 dealing in non-sterling currency units.

In Canterbury the unit is called "tales", and each is equivalent to £1. "The principle is that it allows people to trade their goods and services when they might otherwise be unable to do so because of lack of conventional money," Dr Gray said.

He is offering to do paperwork such as preparation, reading papers, research and drafting documents at a rate of 30 tales an hour; a conference with one in seven of those married in 1987.

But Dr Gray, 36, who is interested in environmental law and personal injury claims, accepts that there



Peter Gray is offering a new line in client care

for example, might need a lawyer but be unable to afford one. Normal fees would prevent a deal, but under the co-operative system the two men can trade with each other.

Dr Gray, a qualified doctor who changed careers two years ago and describes himself as "environmentally and alternatively minded", plans to use his tales on lentils and mung beans, "thus recycling them back into the Lets economy".

He says, however, that it is important that people such as lawyers are seen to be offering "commercial-type" services through the local exchange trading system. Clients, who cannot approach barristers direct, are told to go to a solicitor of their choice and —

if ineligible for legal aid — suggest using Dr Gray's "tales" offer. "Not all solicitors understand about tales and Lets and you may have to try another one," Dr Gray said.

He will try the system for six months, and intends to treat his tales income as if it were pounds for taxation and accounting purposes.

A spokesman for the Bar Council, to whom Dr Gray has applied for permission, said: "On the face of it, there is no reason why he should not offer his services for whatever remuneration he determines, provided it does not bring the profession into any disrepute." But Walter Merricks, director of professional and legal policy at the Law Society, has responded via E-mail with a suggestion that Dr Gray put his proposal past the Kent Law Society first. "I am not sure," he adds, "where solicitors are supposed to collect the mung beans or whatever."

One solicitor, Patrick Stevens, was more sanguine. "If a barrister wants to be paid in mung beans, it's nothing new. Solicitors have been paid peanuts for their legal aid work for years."

Breakdown rate for marriages approaches 40%

By IAN MURRAY, COMMUNITY CORRESPONDENT

FEWER than half of newlyweds will be together for their silver anniversary if divorce rates continue to rise at the present level.

A report by the Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys says that, even though life expectancy is rising, only one in nine newlywed couples in England and Wales can expect to celebrate a golden wedding compared with one in seven of those married in 1987.

Forty-one per cent of current marriages are expected to break down, against an estimate of 37 per cent in 1987 and 34 per cent in 1980. The proportion is rising, by about 1 per cent a year, even though the number of divorces has fallen because of the increase in people choosing to cohabit rather than marry.

There were 158,000 divorces in 1994, a drop of 4 per cent from the previous year. Eighty-eight thousand of the cases involved children; a total of 165,000 under 16. England and Wales has the highest divorce rate in Europe.

The predictions for newlyweds are based on divorce and death trends since 1951. The

1987 prediction was for just over a half of newlyweds to be together at their twenty-fifth anniversary; the latest prediction is for just under half.

The report predicts that the divorce law reforms going through Parliament will cause a temporary surge in the number of divorces as couples attempt to beat the deadline for a quickly obtainable, fault-based divorce. Then there is likely to be a short-term fall in the number of divorces because of the delays imposed by the new law.

The survey suggests that the mere fact of divorce being debated in Parliament is likely to have an effect on people marrying now. Those who were wed at the time of previous law reforms, in 1969 and 1984, have been more likely to seek a divorce.

"Couples who marry when divorce law reform is a subject of public debate may have a slightly different perception and use of the resort to divorce than their counterparts who marry one or two years earlier or later," the report says.

□ Population Trends (Statistical Office: £11)

Whatever the age, smears save lives

MEDICAL BRIEFING

THE Government's report on the taking of cervical smears, published on Monday, has set a target. The preliminary aim is that at least 80 per cent of all women between the ages of 25 and 60 should have a smear taken not less than every five years.

The guidelines will be of interest to three women who had positive smears treated within the past month or so at the same London teaching hospital. One patient, only 25, had her first smear taken when she became pregnant and it unfortunately showed a few abnormal cells. The smear was repeated and the cytologists confirmed the earlier findings.

A suspicious area was found in her cervix but after full consultation it was decided to postpone treatment until the baby was born.

Surprisingly the smear taken at her post-natal examination showed no abnormal cells. But as the results of delivery can disguise abnormalities, the obstetrician repeated the smear six months later: it was abnormal and by now the diseased patch could be diagnosed as obviously

invasive cancer. The patient has had her baby, been treated, will live and will be able to have other children.

The same team treated two women in their middle 60s, neither of whom had had a previous smear. Both had early cancer of the cervix, not yet invasive, both were treated and neither is likely to have any further trouble.

Although the emphasis of the government report has been on achieving more uniform results in the laboratory when interpreting smears, the expertise of the doctor taking them is important.

It is encouraging that despite an increase in cases of cancer of the cervix, the death rate is falling. The history of the three patients at the hospital shows that neither the understandable shyness of a young woman, nor any over-confidence in a pensioner, should deter those age groups from having regular smears that can detect changes even before they have become malignant.

DR THOMAS STUTTAFFORD

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Union puts forward 10-point plan to curb increasing violence against school staff

Beaten teacher calls for legal removal of disruptive children

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

A PRIMARY school teacher who won £82,500 damages after she was attacked by a ten-year-old boy said yesterday that her repeated requests to have him removed from her class had been ignored.

Hazel Spence-Young, who was left permanently disabled, called for legislation to force disruptive children out of classrooms. She said the boy's presence made teaching the class of 49 children at Frederick Bird Junior School in Coventry "like going into battle". Mrs Spence-Young, who shared the class with another teacher, said she was ordered by an educational social worker not to isolate the boy, although a psychologist said he was maladjusted and belonged in a special school.

Mrs Spence-Young, 48, has to wear a neck brace and has all but lost the movement of

her right arm after the assault in September 1989. She has been prescribed morphine to ease constant pain.

The attack happened while the boy and a number of other children were being kept in to catch up on their work. "He insisted on running out of the classroom, shouting and yelling abuse, much of it four-letter expletives. I followed him and tried to persuade him to come back."

She said he went berserk. "There were fists and feet flying. I was being kicked and punched and pummelled." A colleague came to help but Mrs Spence-Young received "three very hard thumps under my chin. My head snapped back." Later she realised she had been badly hurt.

After weeks of physiotherapy and treatment in a neuro-surgical ward, she was told

her whiplash wounds were permanently disabling.

"There should be a legal requirement that once a child has been identified as in need of special care, particularly children who display violence, they should be removed from mainstream school."

Mrs Spence-Young was speaking as her union, the National Association of Schoolmasters and Union of Women Teachers, which won the damages for her from Coventry City Council, unveiled a ten-point plan to curb serious attacks on its members. It said these had risen from 10 in 1990 to 51 last year.

The union described Mrs Spence-Young's compensation as a breakthrough for teachers faced with escalating violence in the classroom. The union is pursuing damages in nine other cases. They include a



Hazel Spence-Young is one of a growing number of teachers being attacked and seriously injured by pupils

Manchester science teacher pulled to the ground by her hair and hit with a brick by a girl aged 15, and a male technology teacher in Nottinghamshire who had his jaw broken in two places by a 15-year-old.

The union's proposals, to be

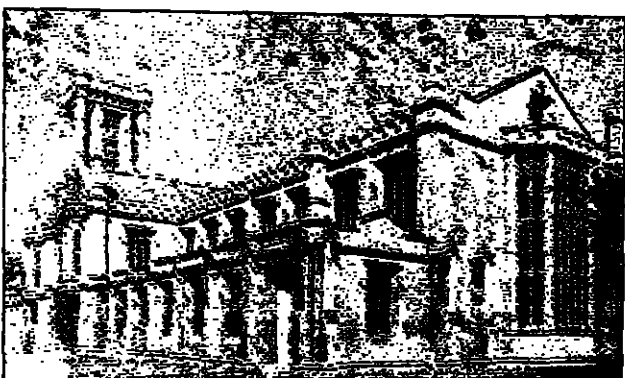
presented to a government group looking at school security, include a greater readiness to heed classroom teachers calling for support and more pupil referral units, or "sin bins", to take disruptive children.

Nigel de Gruchy, the

union's general secretary, said: "This is an extremely useful precedent. We are serving notice upon all employers that they must ensure the safety of teachers. Where they fail to do this, NASUWT will be in hot pursuit."

A spokesman for Coventry

City Council declined to comment on the case of an individual child or the decision to keep him in the mainstream class. He said the council would have contested Mrs Spence-Young's version of events, but its key witness, who saw the assault, had died.



Cheltenham College, which was founded in 1841

Cheltenham to take girls in all classes

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

CHELTENHAM COLLEGE is to abandon single-sex education by admitting girls throughout the school. Plans to segregate the sexes during the years of puberty have been dropped after opposition from parents.

The college has had a co-educational sixth form for more than a decade and began taking girls to its junior school in 1994. But the interim years have hitherto been a male preserve.

The 70 girls now at the junior school were to have been asked to leave at the age of 13, with encouragement to return in the sixth form. But the change of heart announced yesterday will enable them to stay on for the rest of their schooldays.

Peter Wilkes, the Head-

master, said: "We have to move with the times. The girls are doing awfully well, and we decided it was no longer relevant to have this small section that is single sex." From September 1998 the school, where fees for boarders are £12,000, will be fully mixed. Eventually, the roll will rise from 565 to 650.

Mr Wilkes said: "This is part of our determination to make the college a better school still. We shall be expanding our capacity and building new houses for girls."

He is prepared for criticism from traditionalists. "There are bound to be a few old boys who object, but we will soon be in the 21st century and we are determined to keep up with that."

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Lesbian Wren was 'too scared to report navy rapist'

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

A FORMER Wren confessed to MPs yesterday that she had been raped when she was in the Royal Navy but was afraid to tell the authorities because she was lesbian.

Karen Greig, 33, was one of several witnesses who appeared before the Select Committee on the Armed Forces Bill and described what it was like to be a homosexual in the services.

Miss Greig said she was raped by a male colleague who was serving with her at HMS Daedalus, a shore-based training facility at Fareham in Hampshire. She remained silent about the attack for a long time because she was so scared of being exposed as a lesbian and being dismissed.

She arranged a transfer to the naval air station HMS Gannet at Prestwick, near Glasgow, but was still persecuted by her attacker. She suspected that he knew she was a lesbian. When at last

she complained to her superiors, she was asked "incredibly intimate questions" and was told: "Maybe you're not handling this very well because you're lesbian."

Miss Greig, who joined the Navy in 1981, said that once she had admitted her homosexuality the naval authorities were interested only in having her removed from the service. She spent three days in a psychiatric hospital and was discharged in 1983.

After she had completed her evidence to the committee, she was near to tears. She said that the man who had raped her had never been charged.

MPs on the committee, which was taking evidence about the Government's ban on homosexuals in the Armed Forces, were clearly shocked by her story. John Reid (Lab, Motherwell North) said that if what she had described was accurate he felt "revolted and disgusted" that any man could

treat a rape victim in such a manner.

A Royal Navy spokeswoman said after the hearing that any allegation of rape would have been rigorously investigated.

Other witnesses from Stonewall and Rank Outsiders, two organisations lobbying for equal rights in the forces, told the committee that homosexual servicemen and women had no one they could trust to discuss their problems with. They said that even military chaplains were breaching the confidentiality of pastoral care and reporting homosexuals to their commanding officers.

Niall Johnston, 35, a former army major and now a senior chaplain to the National Health Service, said that a "substantial" number of service chaplains were following Ministry of Defence guidelines rather than those of the Church. He said that he had statements from former and

serving army chaplains that their commanding officers were putting them under strong pressure to reveal information relating to soldiers' sexual orientation.

Mr Johnston then produced a letter written 24 hours earlier by the Right Rev John Kirkham, Bishop of Sherborne and Anglican Bishop

to Her Majesty's Forces, who said that confidentiality was "paramount and absolute".

The Right Rev Francis Walsley, Roman Catholic Bishop to Her Majesty's Forces, said that a person's sexuality revealed in confidence should never be disclosed.

Ian Hamill, director of ser-

vice personnel policy at the MoD, told the committee that chaplains should not breach confidences but said that medical officers were in a different position. They were part of the chain of command and had a duty to preserve health, security and discipline.

Three white soldiers are to be court-martialled after two

black civilian women complained that they were racially abused while visiting an army barracks. The three men, who are members of the Cheshire Regiment, have been charged with using abusive and insulting language towards the women at Oakington Barracks near Cambridge last year.



Members of the Stonewall and Rank Outsiders pressure groups before giving evidence at the Commons yesterday

Blair tries to counter Harman's critics

By JILL SHERMAN

TONY BLAIR has denied planning to drop Harriet Harman if she fails to get re-elected to the Shadow Cabinet.

The Labour leader has told colleagues that he regards Ms Harman as a "key member of his team who is doing a first-class job in the health portfolio". His intervention follows newspaper articles claiming that he intended to withdraw his support.

He is impressing on his colleagues that Ms Harman should be judged on her record as Shadow Health Secretary rather than her decision to send her son to a grammar school. The signs are, however, that her position is still precarious. Criticism of her decision has not abated, and her opponents claim that she will be a liability in the run up to the general election.

Her friends admit that she may not get re-elected to the Shadow Cabinet — her vote has never been high — and are advising her not even to try to gain re-election to the National Executive Committee.

Tories now need more than the 'feel-good' factor

The Tories are over the worst, but how long, if ever, will it take to get into an election-saving, let alone winning, position? That is the central question facing the Cabinet this morning as it holds one of its occasional political strategy sessions.

Support for the Tories has firmed since last autumn, although its latest poll ratings have been hit by the backwash from the row over the Scott report. But taking the last three months as a whole, Tory support in the MORI polls for *The Times* is, at 28 per cent, one percentage point higher than during the previous three months and three to four points higher than in the same period a year earlier.

The other positive indicator is the trend of local council by-elections. The Tories have gained a net nine seats since last October, including four last Thursday. The party's share of the vote has improved steadily over the period and is 1.4 points higher than when these seats were last fought. The upward trend in Tory support is confirmed by the thorough analysis of the Association of Liberal Democrat Councillors. The Tory gains have been in its traditional strong areas such as Horsham, Worthing, Erewash and North Yorkshire. But Tory support is still low by historic standards.

The recovery potential is anyone's guess. There are two broad views: "economic determinists", such as Michael Heseltine and advisers like Maurice Saatchi, and the "political sceptics". The former believe that Tory support will pick up provided the "feel-good" factor is positive, while the latter think that economic recovery is a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition for electoral revival compared with broader public attitudes towards the Government and the Prime Minister.

My instincts are that the "political sceptics" are more likely to be right over the long term. Admittedly, economic optimism is already improving and is now at its highest level since the end of 1994. Confidence should be further stimulated by the Budget tax cuts which will feed through

next month and by any pick-up in the pace of recovery later in the year. These factors should lead to some Tory gain in the polls over the next few months. But in the other direction is the public's disillusionment with Tory divisions, dating back to sterling's forced withdrawal from the exchange-rate mechanism in September 1992 and the subsequent battles over the Maastricht Bill. These events resulted in an unprecedented collapse in the public's satisfaction with the Government, which shows little sign of any real recovery.

Consequently, whatever boost the Tories receive from rising disposable incomes may in part be offset by the public's deep hostility to the Government, and, incidentally, by the more acceptable face of the Blairite Labour Party. The odds must be that it will be hard — though obviously not impossible — for the Tories to get much more than 36 to 38 per cent of the vote, against just over 42 per cent at the 1992 general election. A secondary prediction is that the Liberal Democrats could win more seats, either side of 30, even if their national vote does not improve, because of their concentration on the South West.

A wild card is Sir James Goldsmith's Referendum Party. His success in coming from nowhere to 18 per cent in France during the European elections two years ago and Sunday's NOP poll suggesting that 30 per cent might support the party reveal the strength of Eurosceptic feeling but are not good guides to what might happen in a general election. This is fought over the choice of government of the country rather than just Europe, which is low on most voters' priorities. Sir James could stir a lot of attention, but the next election will not be decided by him. It will turn on a balance between economic recovery and tiredness with a party that has been in office so long.

PETER RIDDELL



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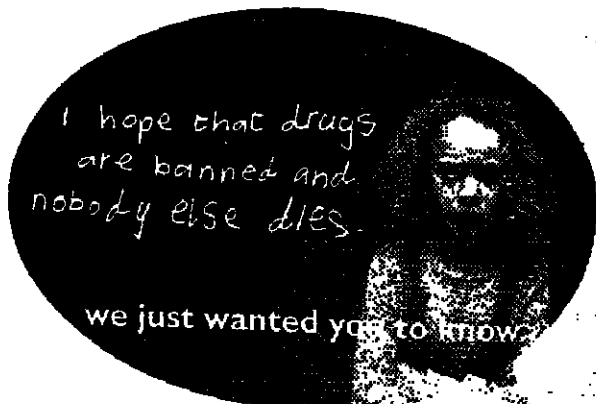
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Ulster parties condemn plans for 'hybrid' poll

By NICHOLAS WATT, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT, AND ARTHUR LEATHLEY

MINISTERS came under attack from both sides of the political divide in Northern Ireland yesterday over their plans to hold elections in the Province.

Northern Ireland parties in conflict over the style of elections for a new peace forum joined together in dismissing government plans for a compromise option combining each electoral system.

Democratic Unionists and the Social Democratic and Labour Party insist that candidates should be elected under a single party list system while Ulster Unionists favour five candidates being elected individually in each of 18 constituencies.

However, ministers remained convinced last night that a "hybrid" plan, combining the two electoral systems, offers the best prospect of bringing together the parties.

Last night the Cabinet's Northern Ireland committee was finalising plans at Downing Street under which some candidates in the May elections would be elected individually and others would

be elected on the party list system. Ministers said in a consultation paper published last week that if there were an electoral system "which might combine elements of both approaches, the Government would be happy to consider it urgently and constructively".

One option under consideration is for three members to be elected individually in each of the 18 constituencies, with the remaining two members elected on the list system.

Although the Ulster Unionists, led by David Trimble, claim that the list system offers other parties an electoral advantage, the compromise option resembles plans put forward by the party early last year.

Seamus Mallon, the deputy leader of the SDLP, said that the hybrid system would not work. "I cannot see the logic of it. It seems to me an absolute contradiction in terms. Whoever thought out that bright idea does not realise the realities of elections."

The SDLP initially opposed the Government's plans for

elections. However, the party later said that it would stand for elections after discussions with the DUP on the list system.

Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, insisted yesterday that the Government would have to come forward with plans that would, in its judgment, have the best prospects of finding widespread acceptance. "I think it is very important now that the Government should be allowed to come forward with its own proposals for legislation for the elective process."

"What people want here in Northern Ireland is to see the parties talking and it is our responsibility to devise a method which offers the best prospects of that."

As anger at the Government's plans increased, Sir Patrick had a 90-minute meeting in Belfast with Peter Robinson, the DUP deputy leader, during which Mr Robinson voiced his concerns about the proposed role for the Dublin government in the all-party talks. Unionists argue that Dublin should be

kept out of discussions on the internal affairs of Northern Ireland.

He also held talks in London with Mr Trimble and his deputy, John Taylor, at which the Unionists underlined their fears that the Government was backing away from making the disarming of terrorists a priority issue at the all-party talks planned for June.

Peter Robinson, the deputy leader of the DUP, said that the hybrid electoral system would complicate the elections. "Can you imagine if we had that kind of system. The elector who comes along to the booth may be required to vote in a referendum, get another ballot paper to vote in a list system, and get another ballot paper to vote on a constituency basis. I can just imagine the number of spoilt papers."

Ministers also faced pressure from John Alderdice of the moderate Alliance Party. He said that all-party talks could collapse on the first day if the issue of disarming terrorists was not the first item on the agenda.



Loyalists blamed for riots in Belfast

By NICHOLAS WATT

LOYALIST paramilitaries were blamed yesterday for organising riots in Belfast on Monday night in which masked gunmen set fire to buses and vans.

Police said that the disturbances were planned and co-ordinated. Speculation that the Ulster Defence Association was responsible grew when its political wing, the Ulster Democratic Party, admitted that the riots were "well orchestrated".

John White, a leading member of the UDP, said that loyalists took to the streets after the RUC carried out house searches in Protestant areas. "Loyalists have maintained their ceasefire and yet the police are carrying out searches. The RUC is harassing loyalists and attempting to gather intelligence."

The RUC said it searched two houses over the weekend and three on Monday. It is understood that the raids were part of an investigation into the funding of paramilitary groups.

Two main paths to the peace forum

By OUR IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

POLITICAL parties in Northern Ireland have put forward proposals for two types of elections to the peace forum.

The Ulster Unionists want voters in each of Northern Ireland's 18 parliamentary constituencies to elect five people to a 90-member body. The single transferable vote system would be used.

This proposal would be easy to introduce because the elections would be held along similar lines to the elections to the last assembly in Northern Ireland, which sat from 1982-86. The legislation in the Northern Ireland Assembly Elections Order of 1982 would need to be updated, although this would be straightforward.

The Democratic Unionists and the SDLP favour a list system in which voters would register their support for a political party rather than for individual candidates. Under this system Northern Ireland

would be treated as a single constituency.

Parties would be awarded seats at the forum according to their share of the vote. They would choose their candidates from a list drawn up before the election. The DUP and SDLP favour this system because they always do well in European elections, which is the only other poll in which Northern Ireland is treated as a single constituency.

The Government says that this system would require new legislation because there is no enacted precedent for a list system. In a paper drawn up during this month's consultation with the political parties the it said that an immediate problem would be how to register the parties. "Since no system of political party registration exists in the UK, some certain method of identifying the parties contesting the election would need to be established."

Labour to exploit report on Tory council scandal

By JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

MINISTERS will face new accusations of Tory sleaze this week when the first of two damaging reports into the Westminster Council "homes-for-votes" scandal is expected to be published.

Labour said yesterday that it would step up its campaign to exploit Tory embarrassment over the allegations of gerrymandering by senior councillors and officials in the Tory local authority.

The row centres on the role of Dame Shirley Porter, former leader and mayor of Westminster Council, Barry Legg, Tory MP for Milton Keynes South West and former council chief whip, and seven other councillors and officials during the late 1980s. An inquiry was launched into allegations that the council used its housing policy to fill marginal wards with Tory voters for the 1990 local elections.

In an initial report in January 1994, John Magill, the district auditor, said that the nine councillors and officials could face surcharges of almost £22 million. That figure has now risen to almost £30 million.

Mr Magill's completed 900-page report is expected to be published by mid-April. He is

thought likely to confirm his provisional findings that the council illegally attempted to woo likely Tory voters and oust Labour-supporting tenants by selling council houses in key marginal wards.

Labour is about to seize on a second report into allegations that Westminster councillors housed 100 homeless families in two tower blocks with an asbestos problem. That report is expected to be published later this week.

The families were relocated in 1989 to the Hermes and Chantry Points blocks in Harrow Road, near Paddington in north-west London, even though the council's environmental health officer had given warning some years before of the health risk.

It is claimed that councillors tried to safeguard Tory marginal wards, such as Bayswater and Little Venice, by shifting the potential Labour voters into a safe Labour ward.

Tory sources said that they would not comment until the reports had been published.

IN PARLIAMENT

YESTERDAY in the Commons: questions to Social Security Minister and the Prime Minister; Nursery Education and Grant; Maintained Schools Bill; debate on effect of government policies on home and choice ownership. In the Lords: the Broadcasting Bill, third reading; prevention of terrorism measures.

TODAY in the Commons: backbench debates; education and employment questions; Reserve Forces Bill, second reading; Food Protection (Emergency Prohibitions) (Oil and Chemical Pollution of Fish and Poultry) Order; City of Westminster Bill, revised motion. In the Lords: effect of government economic strategy; Restaurants (Service and Cover Charges) Bill, committee stage.

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'I have taken a gamble ... but in the end it wasn't a difficult decision'

Mother turns down cancer treatment to save unborn baby

A MOTHER who refused to have treatment for breast cancer to save her unborn child said yesterday she was confident she had made the right decision. Sonya Short, 29, who was told she had cancer 12 weeks into her pregnancy, knew chemotherapy and radiation would kill the foetus.

On Saturday she gave birth to a healthy boy, named Charlie, who weighed 7lb 13oz, and immediately started a course of treatment. Doctors at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle upon Tyne hope that the drug Tamoxifen will now take effect and that the cancer has not spread to a critical level.

Mrs Short said yesterday: "I have taken a gamble but when I look at Charlie I know it was worth it. I don't know yet what the future holds for me but I've got a lovely son and I wouldn't have jeopardised his life for anything. People have been

telling me how brave I have been, but I really don't think I am. If I hadn't been pregnant I would never have known I had breast cancer and would have carried on as normal. Knowing that I couldn't have gone through with a termination for anything. There is no doubt that Charlie is very special. All babies are special but there's something different about this one."

The former nurse, who cared for terminally ill cancer patients, is home again in Blaydon, Tyne and Wear, with her husband Kevin, 31, and daughter Molly, 2.

Her GP discovered a lump while carrying out a routine check eight weeks into her pregnancy. A month later, after tests at hospital, it was confirmed that the lump was malignant. She had a mastectomy, but there is a risk the cancer will have spread through her body. Mrs Short

knew the extent of the disease would not be known until after her baby was born and is awaiting the result of tests.

She said: "Both Kevin and I feel there is a reason why I became pregnant and that it was meant to be. With that in mind we couldn't end Charlie's life and deprive him of a chance of a future."

"I had gone into hospital thinking I would be told the lump was due to normal pregnancy changes. But suddenly Kevin and I were faced with having to decide between terminating the pregnancy or me having a mastectomy and waiting six months to see if I was cured. In the end it wasn't a very hard decision to make."

Mr Short, also a nurse, said: "We are happy we have a beautiful baby boy now. I am incredibly proud of Sonya when I think of what she has done. She found the courage from somewhere. The future is



Sonya and Kevin Short with Charlie, who would have been killed by her treatment

very scary but we both talked about what should be done and knew we couldn't get rid of the baby."

Tom Lennard, the consultant surgeon treating Mrs Short, said he was optimistic about her chances of a full recovery. "She is a very brave

woman and knows exactly what lies ahead of her. We are just keeping our fingers crossed that everything will be all right. We can't give guarantees but she will be receiving the best treatment possible."

Mr Lennard, who described

Mrs Short as a model patient, added: "Sonya started taking anti-cancer drugs very shortly after the birth of little Charlie. For the next two weeks she will have scans and from them we will be able to determine the extent of the disease and whether it has spread."

Brussels reprieves open-platform bus

The open-platform double-decker bus has been reprieved by Brussels bureaucrats. European Union safety commissioners had ruled that by 2000 all buses should have doors to protect passengers; however, it has been agreed that London Transport can commission a new hop-on, hop-off vehicle. The EU said: "If London Transport wanted to build a new generation of Routemasters, all the UK Government would have to do is ask for an exemption to the ruling and that would allow open-platform buses to continue in London." London Transport has asked a design company to look at replacing the Routemaster.

Tennis appeal ruled out

Two tennis players alleged to have tested positive for cocaine at the French Open lost their attempt to delay disciplinary proceedings by the International Tennis Federation. Mats Wilander, of Sweden, and Karel Novacek, of the Czech Republic, had sought an injunction forcing postponement of the proceedings until after a full High Court hearing in June of their claim that current drug-testing procedures are unfair.

Thames lido floated

By the end of the century Londoners could be swimming and relaxing in the Thames in a floating pool moored off the South Bank. The 50m pool would be built in a floating steel hull rising and falling with the tide. A clear glass roof would slide open on sunny days. The project is the brainchild of Coin Street Community Builders, an environment action group and developer, which is currently restoring the Oxo Tower on the Thames.

Urban perch for pelican

A pelican is living wild beside a city river. Normally only found in warm areas such as Florida, the bird is believed to have escaped from a collection. It regularly perches on the roof of a factory in Enfield, north London, to keep warm. Barry Smithson, who runs a wildlife rescue service in the River Lea area, said: "It must have found things pretty cold in the last few weeks, but as long as it has a good food supply I'm sure it will survive. The rivers and reservoirs around here are well stocked with fish."



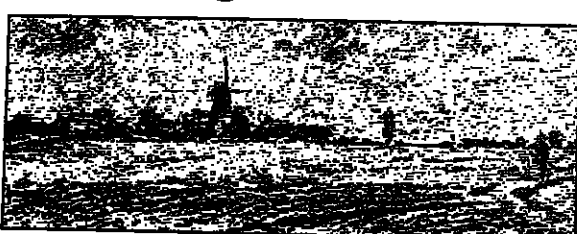
Solicitor struck off

A solicitor who took at least £44,000 from clients' accounts was struck off yesterday. Philip Graham Rees, 45, used the money for family holidays and to buy a car. Gerald Lynch, for the Law Society, told a solicitors' disciplinary tribunal. Mr Rees, a partner of Bowen-Rees-Jones, of Risca, Gwent, admitted improper use of client funds for his own purposes and breaches of accounts rules.

Scots army marches on

The future of the Atholl Highlanders, Britain's only private army, is secure. John Murray, the South African surveyor who inherited the title of 11th Duke of Atholl, has written to the Atholl estates trust, saying the continued existence of the 85-strong guard is "imperative". Fears were raised after the death of the 10th Duke of Atholl last month that the Highlanders might be disbanded.

Arresting Constables



Two views of London by John Constable, which have never been on public view, have been bought for £82,000 by an anonymous collector at Phillips in London. The pencil drawings of a windmill at Barnes in 1818 (detail above), and the Thames waterfront and the "new" Waterloo Bridge in 1817 were given by Constable's grandson Hugh to a cousin and remained in the family.

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Wingate, whose operations included the Second World War, selling his father's medals and papers expected to fetch £100,000.

Decorations of the auction include a gate's triple (1950) awarded during the Second World War. Under the terms of the auction, the medals and papers will be sold in a series of three lots. The first lot, which includes a medal awarded to Wingate in March 1945, is expected to fetch at least £10,000. The second lot, which includes a medal awarded to Wingate in March 1945, is expected to fetch at least £10,000. The third lot, which includes a medal awarded to Wingate in March 1945, is expected to fetch at least £10,000.

Colonel Wingate's general's son, who he would have inherited the title of, died in the Imperial War Museum. Unfortunately, the museum's collection of medals and papers is not complete.

Officers for U

By John ...

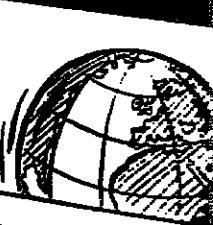
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Bridge: crawled ... through minefield

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Orde Wingate's son to sell war papers and medals

By ALAN HAMILTON
AND JOHN SHAW

THE son of Major-General Orde Wingate, whose behind-the-lines operations turned the tide of the Second World War in Burma, is selling his father's collection of medals and papers. They are expected to fetch more than £90,000.

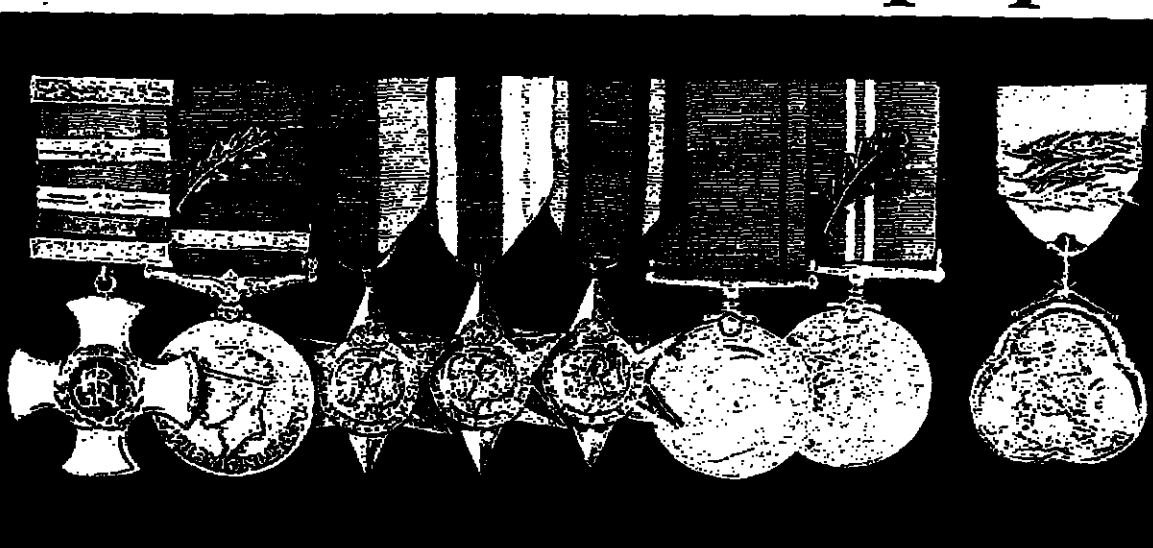
Decorations to be sold at auction include General Wingate's triple DSO, one of only 30 awarded during the Second World War. Other items to come under that hammer at Sotheby's on April 11 include his service revolver and helmet, found in the wreckage of an aircraft when Wingate was killed in northern Assam in March 1944.

The medals are expected to make at least £50,000 and the papers relating to Wingate's service, including the founding of his Chindits, a further £40,000 at a specialist literary sale on July 11.

Colonel Orde Wingate, the general's son, said yesterday that he would have preferred to have donated the collection to the Imperial War Museum. "But it is unfortunately not a perfect world



Colonel Orde Wingate, left, hopes his father's medals and papers will fetch £90,000. General Wingate, right, was described by Churchill as a man of genius



and I find myself in a position where I must sell them; I need money."

"I hope the museum or some similar body will come and buy them, put them on display, and make the archive available to those who want to write about my father in the future," Colonel

Wingate, who was a major in the Royal Artillery, his father's old regiment, until 1978, said he had contacted members of the family and they understood his decision to sell.

General Wingate was born in India and brought up in a strictly puritan Plymouth Brethren

household. He was revered by his men but had repeated clashes with senior generals, details of which emerge from his papers. He was an undoubted thorn in the flesh of his superiors.

Experience in Palestine and Abyssinia before the war led to the development of his tactics for

deep penetration behind enemy lines, which he used to great effect in Burma.

He was the first to realise the potential of direct air support in place of artillery in jungle warfare, tactics he employed in the Chindit campaign against the occupying Japanese. Although

fewer than 900 of the 2,000 men who took part in the first operation in 1943 survived, better supplies and air support on his second thrust a year later ensured greater success and took the enemy by surprise.

David Erskine-Hill, medal specialist at Sotheby's, said yester-

day: "I think it is fair to say that Wingate single-handedly turned the tide of war in Burma. At the time we had lost Hong Kong and Singapore, and the Japanese were at the gates of India. Morale was low but he said the enemy was not invincible. He trained men to be better jungle fighters than they were. Churchill described him as a man of genius who might well have become a man of destiny."

Peter Beal, manuscript expert at Sotheby's who is cataloguing the general's papers, said: "Wingate was an incredible character who did not beat about the bush. He told people exactly what he thought, and you can see exactly how he got the generals' backs up. On the other hand, he got things done that you wouldn't do by pussyfooting around. He was obviously a great leader and an outstanding man, that comes through vividly."

Mountbatten, a great supporter, once told Wingate that he should not be fighting people on his own side as well as the enemy. "It's all here — the planning, the campaigns, the confrontations; it is a remarkable property," Dr Beal said.

Officer honoured for UN bravery

By JOHN YOUNG

A BRITISH Army officer who saved the life of a Canadian colleague in Croatia last year was presented with the Medal of Bravery by the Governor-General of Canada, Romeo LeBlanc, in London yesterday. It was the first time that a Governor-General, the Queen's representative, had presented such an award outside Canada.

Major Toby Bridge of The King's Royal Hussars was serving with the United Nations Protection Force last September when the vehicle in which he and Major Bruce Henwood of the Canadian Army and a Dutch colleague were travelling struck an anti-

tank mine. The blast left the three men unconscious and surrounded by unexploded mines.

The citation states that upon regaining consciousness, Major Bridge administered aid to the badly injured Canadian team leader, thus saving his life. He then led the Dutch officer, Captain Wiedra, who was in severe shock, through the minefield to safety.

Major Bridge then re-entered the unmarked minefield, crawled back through the wreckage to the team leader, and brought him to safety," the citation says. "Throughout he tried to calm and reassure the severely wounded men, who were later brought to the hospital, where they were successfully treated."

Major Henwood, who lost both legs in the explosion, said yesterday: "Toby Bridge single-handedly rescued me and Captain Wiedra. If it had not been for him I would surely have died. Toby did not have to be there. He only came along for the ride."

Major Bridge said the priority had been to give Major Henwood first aid. "I was very lucky. I had moved to the seat behind the driver purely out of vanity because I wanted to improve my suntan."

Mr LeBlanc said that Canada wished to honour a British officer for a special act of bravery. "Peacekeeping requires a lonely courage."



Bridge crawled back through minefield

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China warned not to tangle with American Navy

FROM JAMES PRINGLE IN PEKING

PEKING accused America yesterday of gross interference in its internal affairs and a dangerous climate of war hysteria seemed to be developing as China began a fresh round of exercises in the Taiwan Strait.

The latest manoeuvres are being held closer than ever to Taiwanese territory in the north-western area of the strait. William Perry, the US Defence Secretary, in a fresh warning to Peking not to attack Taiwan, said: "America has the best damned navy in the world, and no one should ever forget that."

Mr Perry's speech to members of Congress, and American-Taiwanese talks on a reported request by Taipei for submarines and other arms, came as the United States sent two aircraft carriers into the region.

"Peking should know — and this [American armada] will remind them — that, while

MANOEUVRES

they are a great military power, the premier, the strongest military power, in the western Pacific is the United States," Mr Perry said.

However, Winston Lord, US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and the Pacific, took a different tack, emphasising America's confidence that, although the situation was fraught with danger, "we are not on the brink of war."

Reporting the start of the new Chinese manoeuvres yesterday, residents in Pingtan, the Chinese headquarters for the exercises, said there had been artillery fire during a mock battle to capture a deserted island and warplanes were in the air.

The exercises, the third set to be held in less than two weeks in the run-up to Taiwan's first presidential elec-

tion, on Saturday, involve air, sea and ground forces. Earlier live-fire exercises in the south-western area of the strait are due to end today.

The new manoeuvres simulate landings on terrain similar to Taiwan's, although they are designed principally to put pressure on voters not to support political figures like President Lee Teng-hui, front-runner in the elections, who is considered in Peking to favour the independence of Taiwan which China regards as a renegade province.

A new climate of hysteria, which some diplomats in Peking feared could lead accidentally into military action, seemed to be growing. It included unconfirmed reports that the carrier USS Nimitz, which presumably carries nuclear weapons and is now on her way to the area, might force her way into the strait despite warnings this week by Li Peng, the Chinese Prime



Residents of Tungchu, in the Mat-su group, prepare for evacuation from their island home yesterday as more Chinese military exercises get under way.

Minister, to the Americans to keep out.

On the question of the possibility of the Nimitz sailing through the strait, the Foreign Ministry said: "We would like to express displeasure to the United States for grossly interfering in China's internal affairs and brazenly showing its force there [in the strait]. The US must immediately stop its activities designed to interfere in China's

internal affairs and to intensify tension in the Taiwan Strait area." The official repeated an earlier statement that Taiwan was a part of China, not a protectorate of the United States.

America has deployed warships east of Taiwan in response to the tension in the 125-mile-wide strait, spurred by the Chinese war games. Aircraft from the carrier USS Independence made training flights yesterday.

In Peking, the Foreign Ministry also confirmed that a meeting was planned between the Chinese Foreign Minister, Qian Qichen, and his American counterpart, Warren Christopher. The US State Department said last night

that the meeting would take place in The Hague on April 21. Envoys point out that such a meeting last summer went some way towards defusing troubled Sino-American relations then.

□ Taipei: A Taiwanese warship rescued eight seamen after a 5,000-tonne Chinese container ship sank in the Taiwan Strait near the war games, the state television service said yesterday. Sixteen members of the crew were still missing. (Reuters)

Presidential rival accuses leader of provoking discord

BY DAVID WATTS AND JONATHAN MIRSKEY IN TAIPEI

LIN YANG-KANG, the presidential candidate of Taiwan's opposition New Party, accused President Lee Teng-hui yesterday of deliberately whipping up the China crisis.

Speaking at a press conference with his deputy, Hau Pei-tsun, he said that if he was elected, China's war games in the Taiwan Strait would end. The two men, expelled from the ruling Kuomintang (KMT) last year, are engaged in a bitter ideological feud with their old Nationalist colleagues as to who best represents the legacy of the Kuomintang founder, Sun Yat-sen. They accuse President Lee, along with the United States, of provoking discord with China.

"Foreigners don't understand Mr Lee," said Mr Hau. "What he wants is a long-term personal dictatorship."

Perhaps, the most bitter point of contention between the New Party and the Kuomintang is that Mr Lee broke a promise not to run for the presidency. He has already served eight years, including completing the term of President Chiang Ching-kuo, who died in office.

The differences between the two parties centre on the nature of the relationship to be established with the mainland, and Taiwan's future

social and economic policies. "Lee is opening the door to more influence of big business on government policy," said Alice Kao, a former newspaper executive and a member of parliament. "The gap between rich and poor is getting wider. We won't spend on a bigger war or social welfare."

The New Party's scathing criticism of Mr Lee, the country's first Taiwan-born President, stems from his studied ambivalence in cross-strait relations. It accuses him of speaking out of both sides of his mouth, on the one hand but acting as though he is a dyed-in-the-wool believer in independence.

"The people are living in a very ambivalent society," said a New Party supporter, and Lee uses that ambivalence. He says, 'I say one China but I'm not going to talk to them about that'. The sentimentality of the people fits in with that. They say, 'how can a Taiwanese sell us out?'"

But the New Party believes he has done just that, provoking China into confrontation at a time when the relationship was developing gradually, and without drama towards some form of unification in the future.



Lin: blames President Lee for the China crisis.

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Mandela granted divorce after judge rejects legal 'ploy'

FROM INIGO GILMORE IN JOHANNESBURG

A JUDGE yesterday officially ended one of the world's best-known marriages, and further public humiliation of President Mandela, granting the South African leader a divorce from his wife, Winnie, who had failed to challenge accusations of adultery.

Judge Frickie Eloff announced in Johannesburg's Supreme Court he had rejected Mrs Mandela's claim that there was hope of reconciliation, and ordered her to pay undisclosed costs. "The plaintiff [Mr Mandela] is entitled to a divorce. His claim is unanswerable," the judge said.

Mrs Mandela, who wore a

modest mauve suit, kept her head bowed as the verdict was given and hurried from court.

Minutes earlier she had made a bizarre attempt to block the divorce by dismissing her lawyers. Wim Trengove, Mr Mandela's lawyer, sprang up to denounce "the oldest trick in the book. The defendant should not be allowed to get away with a ploy as obvious as that."

The judge asked Mrs Mandela to either call witnesses or take the stand herself. With tears in her eyes and a shaky voice, she said she could not take the stand and needed legal guidance. "I am not the

President. I am an ordinary person, a layman. I am assuring your lordship that it is not a ploy in any part."

However, Judge Eloff was unmoved and declared the defence case closed after Mrs Mandela declined his final offer to take the stand.

Mr Mandela's lawyers had argued for a divorce on the ground that the marriage had irretrievably broken down because of his wife's "brazen public conduct and infidelity". On Monday Mr Mandela stunned the court when he spoke of his loneliness after leaving prison in 1990 to live with a woman who never entered his bedroom when he was awake.

Mrs Mandela's legal team presented an extraordinary defence, claiming that as a member of the royal house of Tembu, the President had to submit himself to tribal mediation to try to save the marriage. Under cross-examination yesterday Mr Mandela again rejected what he indicated was an attempt to stall a divorce.

Three times Mr Mandela begged Ismael Semnaya, his wife's lawyer, not to force him to divulge facts which would damage her image, while the defence sought to portray her as a woman who had suffered greatly at the hands of the apartheid authorities and sacrificed everything for their marriage.

Mr Mandela did not deny that she had made great sacrifices for the "struggle" but said other women had suffered more than she.

Mr Mandela told the court that on Monday night he had received a phone call from their daughter, Zenani, who was distressed at the proceedings. He said in the past he had reluctantly asked his two daughters to reason with his wife to end their marriage in a dignified way. "They are very well aware of the problem that I had at home and they were very sympathetic, but of course, their loyalties are divided. They failed," he said.

The court will reconvene today for hearings over a financial settlement.



Mpofu: hysterical letter by Mrs Mandela

Affair with lawyer highlights infidelity

BY INIGO GILMORE

CENTRAL to President Mandela's successful application for a divorce from his estranged wife were unchallenged claims about her love affair with a lawyer 29 years her junior.

During proceedings in Johannesburg's Supreme Court, Mr Mandela told how a newspaper editor approached him in 1992 with a letter confirming rumours about his wife's infidelity with Dali Mpofu, a lawyer from the African National Congress. To his embarrassment, it also revealed details about their faltering marriage and about allegations that she used money belonging to the ANC for her lover.

Dated March 17, 1992, and handwritten mostly in English, the often hysterical letter, a copy of which was exhibited in court, was written by Mrs Mandela after a row with Mr Mpofu, with whom she had been romantically linked for two years. She begins by warning Mr Mpofu, then 29, that she would not be used by

him and accused him of sleeping with other women, referring to one girlfriend as a "white hag". "You have hurt and humiliated me as a woman," the letter said.

Mr Mpofu, who has never commented on his affair with Winnie, is said to be lying low. His friendship with her dated back to the months preceding the release of her husband in early 1990. He was one of the legal team defending Jerry Richardson, "coach" to the infamous Mandela United football club set up by Winnie in the late 1980s. Richardson was sentenced to hang for the murder of Stompie Moeketsi, 14, but Mr Mpofu's relationship with Mrs Mandela blossomed in spite of the failure of the defence team.



Mothers wait for news with photographs of the children they feared had died in the fire

Manila safety chief says fire-ravaged disco flouted rules

BY OUR FOREIGN STAFF

THE Manila disco ravaged by a fire that claimed at least 150 lives had been authorised to hold 35 people, not the 350 dancers and 40 staff in the premises when the blaze broke out, according to Alfredo Macapugay, the city safety engineer.

President Ramos visited the scene yesterday and ordered a thorough investigation of what he called a "terrible tragedy". He demanded the arrest of the disco's owners if they failed to co-operate. "You better get the owners here for investigation. If any of them refuse, I order their arrest," the President told police officers accompanying him.

However, Hermilo Ocampo, one of the disco's four owners, told reporters that he was granted a fire inspection certificate five years ago. He said he was deeply saddened by the tragedy and vowed to help the investigators.

Dancers in the Ozone Disco Pub in the suburb of Quezon City saw sparks and smoke moments before the disco was plunged into darkness. When they realised there was a fire and only one narrow way out, they stampeded. The disco's original fire exit had been blocked by a new building, fire officers said.

Some of those who died had been trampled underfoot. The bodies were so badly burnt that relatives and friends were trying to identify the victims from jewellery, make-up bags and shoes late yesterday.

Firefighters worked with their bare hands to separate the bodies. Many rescue workers were so overwhelmed that they had to stop for sips of gin. By last night only 16 of the dead had been identified.

Many of those in the disco were young people celebrating the end of the school year. Survivors said the fire appeared to have started in the disc jockey's booth, but radio reports said a kitchen fuel tank may have exploded. Others said the club's foam insulation had ignited.

Marvin Reyes, the disc jockey, said he saw the hair and clothes of screaming victims catch fire. His shouts of warning started a stampede as dancers and staff clambered over each other to get to the single exit corridor, where firefighters found bodies piled waist-deep. Other victims had been crushed when the roof collapsed.

The fire broke out soon after midnight and spread rapidly. It took two hours to extinguish the blaze.

Rosemary Bacanto, 17, still covered in soot in a hospital emergency room, her right arm swathed in bandages, said: "We were just there to party. My two friends invited me to come along. All of a sudden the lights went off. Then we saw fire from the DJ's booth. I felt a very hot blast of air from that direction and all I saw was everyone running towards where we were and we were trampled."

Sudan's Islamic feud engulfs Eritrean exiles

FROM SAM KILEY IN GEDAREF, EASTERN SUDAN

IDRIS IBRAHIM, a Muslim scholar teaching children in the refugee camp in which he has lived for 25 years, gazed east to his homeland in Eritrea. "I can never go home. It is not safe for me, there is fighting."

A member of the strict Ansa Sunaa sect, Mr Ibrahim is also not welcome to stay in Sudan, under a modern brand of Islamic fundamentalism dictated by Hassan el-Turabi, Khartoum's "Ayatollah". Although he has been Sudan's chief exponent of a radical

version of Islam which has alienated fundamentalist regimes in Saudi Arabia, Libya and Iran since 1989, Dr Turabi has preferred until now to control the Government of President al-Bashir from behind the scenes.

This week, with the announcement of the results of Sudan's general elections in which political parties were banned, he is expected to take centre stage as Speaker in the new parliament. A hands-on role in government for Dr Turabi is likely to make life

even more difficult for Mr Ibrahim and the 10,000 other members of the Beni Amir tribe living as refugees in eastern Sudan.

"Our vision of democracy and Islam is to end the cliques of families and sects which have dominated the scene for hundreds of years and introduce grassroots participation," Dr Turabi said.

The Beni Amir, a Sunni tribe which migrated to the Horn of Africa two centuries ago, fell victim to anti-Muslim pogroms in Ethiopia during

the late 1960s. Now they are blamed by Eritrea's Christian-led Government for being behind Khartoum-sponsored attacks against Africa's newest independent country.

They are also under threat from Dr Turabi's campaign to stamp out their "old-fashioned" attitudes towards women and their devotion to old-style Islam.

"Our schools have been shut down many times by the Government. It says that it is Islamic, but it does not like Islam as practised by our

people," Mr Ibrahim said. Most of the Beni Amir, living on patches of exhausted land around Gedaref, one of Sudan's most agriculturally productive areas, want no part in the fighting in Eritrea or in Dr Turabi's crusade to spread his interpretation of the Koran worldwide.

At the end of this month Sudan will face sanctions for refusal to hand over three Egyptians alleged to have been involved in an assassination attempt on President Mubarak last year.

$$y = (x-1)^2$$

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Clinton arms himself for welfare onslaught on Republicans

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER
IN WASHINGTON

WITH Robert Dole hoping to clinch the Republican nomination with landslide victories over Pat Buchanan in yesterday's four Midwest primaries, President Clinton set out his stall for November's election.

The President sent Congress a 1997 budget plan that on paper would balance the nation's books by 2002 while simultaneously cutting taxes for middle-income families by \$107 billion (£70 billion) and protecting popular social programmes from draconian Republican cuts.

The plan stands no chance of enactment. It merely formalises the last offer Mr Clinton made to the Republicans before their 1996 budget talks collapsed in January. It lets him co-opt the Republicans' balanced budget and tax-cut platforms while accusing his opponents of eviscerating education, environmental and health care programmes for the elderly and poor.

The Republicans want much deeper tax cuts and would cut more from the relentlessly expanding Medicare and Medicaid health insurance programmes, but they called the President's plan a fantasy

because its spending cuts were mostly delayed and ill-defined. "If you want a real balanced budget... I am willing to sit down with you, Mr President, any time you are serious," Mr Dole said as he finished campaigning in Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin and Ohio.

Those four states were choosing 229 delegates yesterday, enough to give the 72-year-old Senate leader the total of 996 required to guarantee the nomination if he won them all, but three new polls stole some of the lustre from his achievement.

A Washington Post survey showed Mr Dole trailing Mr Clinton by nine percentage points, with 35 per cent saying he was too old to serve effectively. Most believed that Mr Dole had higher moral standards, but opted for Mr Clinton when it came to personality, vision and ideas.

A USA Today/Gallup poll showed Mr Clinton 12 points ahead and strongly favoured by women and independent voters. For the first time since he took office, a majority, 51 per cent, said he deserved a second term. By 56 per cent to 40 per cent, respondents said the White-water controversy was irrelevant.

A Los Angeles Times poll put Mr Clinton 21 points ahead in California, the huge state he simply must win to retain the Oval Office. As in the Gallup poll, that lead would shrink sharply were General Colin Powell to be Mr Dole's vice-presidential running mate, but the gender gap is even more pronounced in California, with women favouring Mr Clinton over Mr Dole by 62 per cent to 33 per cent.

Mr Clinton's worry is that Ralph Nader, the consumer advocate, will run as the Green Party's candidate in California. Yesterday's poll gave Mr Nader 7 per cent support which could be just enough to let in Mr

Dole if, as expected, the California race tightens. Mr Dole's much bigger fear is that Ross Perot will split the anti-Clinton vote by running again, and yesterday came news that the Texas billionaire has let his new Reform Party put his name on November's presidential ballot in Texas and Florida.

Perot spokesmen said he had no plans to run and was merely a temporary "stand-in" for whoever the Reform Party nominates as its candidate this summer. But other political experts saw the development as the surest sign yet that Mr Perot will run.

WORLD SUMMARY

Benin opts for former dictator

Cotonou, Benin: The former dictator, Brigadier-General Mathieu Kerekou, the first African leader to be ousted at the ballot box in the democracy movement of the 1990s, has been returned to power in a stunning upset at the polls.

State-run radio announced that General Kerekou had won 59 per cent of the vote, defeating the incumbent President Soglo, who had 41 per cent in Monday's presidential run-off. During his 17 years in power, the general's Government was accused of serious human rights abuses to opponents. (AP)

Mugabe named as poll victor

Harare: President Mugabe was officially declared the winner of weekend presidential elections in Zimbabwe in which he was the sole contender. Nearly 70 per cent of the 4.9 million registered voters boycotted the polls.

The election directorate told reporters Mr Mugabe was returned to office for another six-year term with 92.7 per cent of 1,514,061 valid votes cast. (Reuters)

Beazley picked to lead Labor

Kim Beazley, 47, was sworn in yesterday as Australia's Opposition leader and immediately challenged John Howard, the Prime Minister, to a vote on the republican issue. The former Deputy Prime Minister in the Keating Government was elected Labor leader after Paul Keating's resignation when the party lost the general election on March 2. (Reuters)

Thousands held in Middle East

Paris: Human rights leaders meeting here said the Arab world and Israel had more than 45,000 prisoners of conscience. Egypt, Algeria and Syria had the most. The International Human Rights Federation said the figure included 3,500 Arabs held in Israel. Egypt had 16,708 prisoners of conscience. (AFP)

Koala cull is called off

Sydney: International outrage has forced Australian wildlife officials to abandon plans to shoot 2,000 koalas on Kangaroo Island, southwest of Adelaide. The officials had said the island could not support its 5,000 koalas, which faced starvation, but the koalas will now be relocated. (AP)

Rao sets dates for voters' verdict on record of scandal

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI

INDIA will hold a general election in late April and early May, the Election Commission announced last night. The poll will test whether the Congress Party, in power for most of the 49 years of independence, is a dying force after a string of electoral disasters and corruption scandals.

The Himalayan state of Jammu and Kashmir, where Muslim separatists have waged a six-year war against Indian forces, will also vote. This was a surprise decision, given the level of secessionist violence and the certainty of a near-total voter boycott in key areas of the mostly Muslim Kashmir Valley. Voting will be delayed there until late May to enable troops and paramilitary forces to move

in. There is bound to be heightened violence.

It will be the eleventh general election since independence, and by far the most unpredictable. Indian politics, always corrupt, has sunk in voters' minds to venal depths. The entire political establishment has been sullied by a multi-million-pound corruption scandal that has led to formal accusations against one-third of government ministers and touched every major national party except the Left.

Opposition leaders claim that P.V. Narasimha Rao, the Prime Minister, has dirty hands. He has certainly been involved in some shady deals, but so have opposition leaders. The once clean image of the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been

smeared by corruption charges against L.K. Advani, its president, who has resigned from parliament.

Atal Vajpayee, a moderate in a party given to extremist pro-Hindu rhetoric, will be the BJP's prime ministerial candidate. The outcome of the battle between the two biggest forces in Indian politics could be close. Neither is likely to win a clear majority, leaving the National Front/Left Front alliance and regional parties as kingmakers. The BJP would find it difficult to obtain coalition partners: almost all its rivals regard it as a pariah for its anti-Muslim sentiments.

Mr Rao has demonstrated that he has many political lives. He retired after quadruple heart bypass surgery but was brought back to lead Congress after the 1991 assassination of Rajiv Gandhi, the former Prime Minister. Mr Rao, a southerner from Andhra Pradesh, has been India's least charismatic, least visible and most inaccessible leader. No one thought he would survive so long.

He did so because there was nobody more acceptable. Corruption scandals, Hindu-Muslim crises, leadership challenges and parliamentary votes of confidence have come and gone, with Mr Rao still looking solid. The Congress Party is strongest in the south, making it difficult for northern contenders to oust him.

In these elections, Indians will vote in protest against corruption, which will dominate the campaign. The best the main parties can do is to try to convince the electorate that they are less corrupt than the others. Mr Rao will try to persuade voters that he has been rooting out the corrupt, which is not true: the Supreme Court did that.

Polling will begin on April 27, followed by more voting on May 2 and May 7. Kashmir will vote on May 21.



Begum Zia: sworn in for a second term

people were hurt in clashes in the southern city of Khulna.

The new session deepened a two-year-old crisis sparked when opposition parties walked out of the previous parliament, accusing Begum Zia's Government of rigging by-elections. More than 100 people have been killed and thousands injured in clashes this year. (Reuters)

200 hurt in Dhaka riot

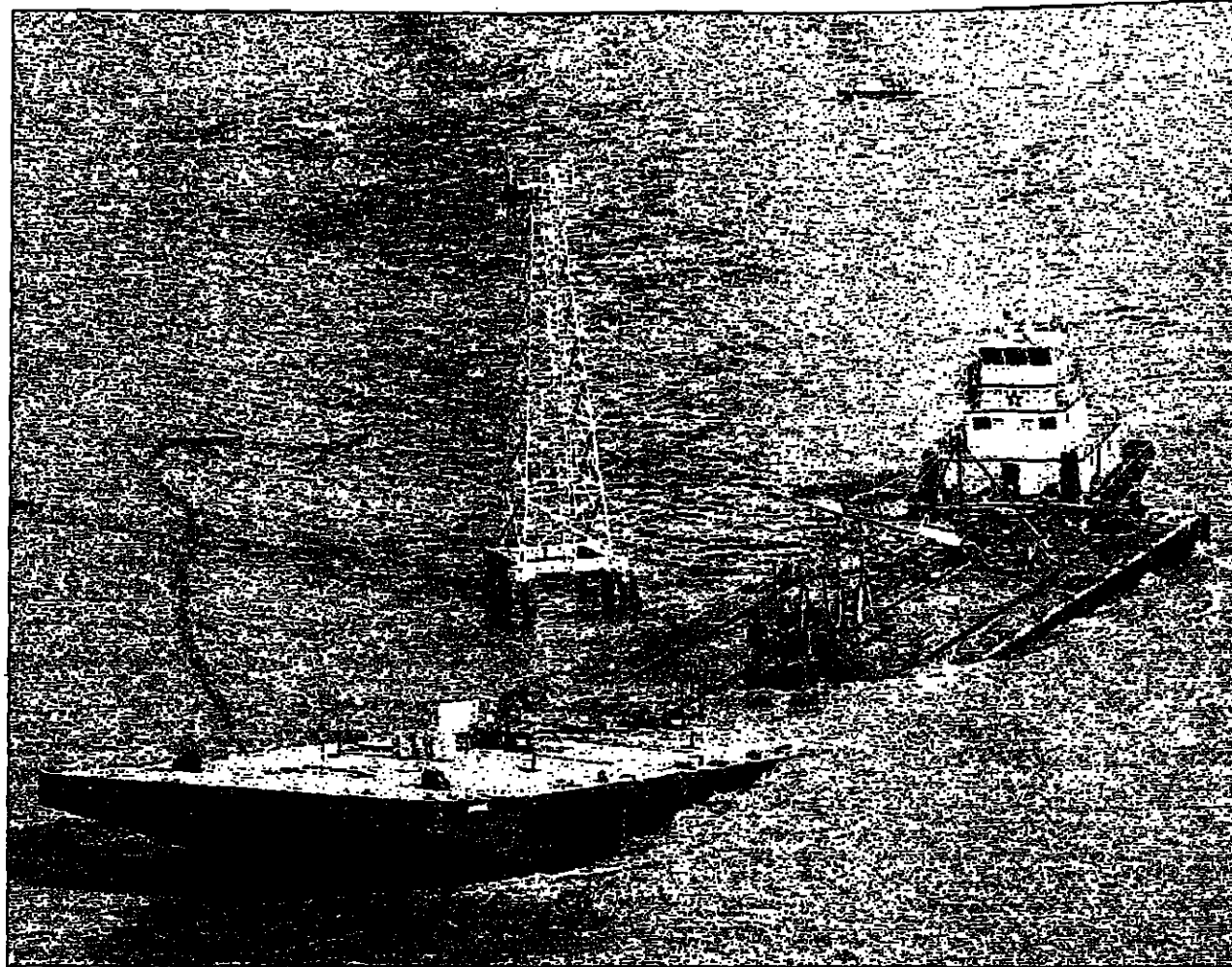
Dhaka: Nearly 200 people were injured in battles in Dhaka yesterday as Bangladesh's newly-elected parliament met shortly after Begum Khalida Zia, the Prime Minister, was sworn in for a second term.

The clashes occurred as tens of thousands of opposition activists tried to march on the parliament. Police and paramilitary forces fought bomb-throwing protesters with rubber bullets, teargas and batons.

Guns were fired at the home of Sheikh Hasina Wajed, the main opposition leader, bombed a newspaper office and tried to set fire to the residence of the vice-chancellor of Dhaka University.

The swearing-in ceremony was attended by only one foreign diplomat, from the Palestine Liberation Organisation. Others apparently heeded opposition calls for a boycott.

One activist was shot dead in Chittagong, and about 30



Oil leaks from a barge that ran aground in high winds in Galveston Bay, Texas. Workers placed booms along the nearby coast to protect it from a five-mile slick, but winds of up to 50mph hampered efforts to

Oil spills into Gulf of Mexico

contain the spill. The barge was carrying 714,000 gallons of heavy fuel oil. Dean Kutz of the US Coast Guard said only two of the 12 compart-

ments had ruptured when the barge broke up on Monday and he was hopeful that no more oil would leak into the sea. Yesterday an empty

barge stood by to take remaining oil from the damaged vessel as soon as the wind decreased. The Buffalo Marine Service, which owns the barge, said that it would pay for the cleaning up operation. (AP)

Raped coma woman has baby boy

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

A WOMAN who was apparently raped in a nursing home after being in a vegetative state for ten years, has given birth to a son.

The infant was born nine weeks prematurely, but his mother remains oblivious to all communication. Doctors believe she is the first such victim to conceive a baby.

The 29-year-old mother from Rochester, New York, was said to be looking "very relaxed" after the natural delivery. However, the experience did not jolt her out of the vegetative state she entered in 1985 after a car crash.

When doctors noticed last summer that she was pregnant they presented various medical options, but the woman's parents, devout Roman Catholics, demanded that the pregnancy should be allowed to continue. They may bring up the child, but would not comment on the birth.

When the 2lb 11oz boy is strong enough, DNA tests will be conducted to identify his father. Numerous male employees and visitors at suburban Rochester's Westfall Healthcare Centre, where the mother was a patient, have been questioned.

The suspects are thought to include a former nurse, John Horace, who this week admitted in court that he molested a 49-year-old disabled female patient at Westfall for a month before being dismissed, was jailed for six months. He has also pleaded guilty to posing as a sex therapist.

Some four months after he left the centre, a medical orderly noticed that the woman's stomach was expanding. Preliminary diagnosis was of a digestive complication, and doctors were shocked when

they realised she was carrying a baby. They were expecting to perform a Caesarean birth in May, but the labour lasted for only an hour. Dr James Woods, an obstetric specialist at the Strong Memorial Hospital, Rochester, said the mother had "tolerated the birth well".

The child has a partially developed lung but is breathing on his own and has a fair chance of surviving. His incubator stands amid the normal gaiety of a maternity ward, brightened by ribbons and cards. The mother was back in her hospital bed yesterday.

Tribute to Jackie's true love from Kennedy survivors

BY QUENTIN LETTS

THE few survivors of the Kennedy White House will assemble in New York on Friday to pay their last respects to Roswell Gilpatric, the former US Deputy Defence Secretary, who was hailed yesterday as "the one true love" in the life of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.

Gilpatric, who died last week aged 89, was a discreet man who takes with him to the grave the details of his relationship with "Jackie O". However, his death has allowed a fuller examination of what he meant to the woman he escorted during her most vulnerable years, between the brutal end to her first marriage and her subsequent acceptance of the hand of Aristotle Onassis.

Manhattan newspapers yesterday described a love affair that brought the former First Lady a happiness she never found again after she suddenly left Gilpatric for Onassis. She gave Gilpatric no warning of what was about to happen, yet in front of reporters he immediately wished her "a happiness that certainly is entitled her".

A hint of their closeness was betrayed in 1970 when letters Jackie sent to Gilpatric in the 1960s became public knowledge. In one of them she wrote: "I would have told you before I left, but then everything happened so much more quickly than I planned. I saw somewhere what you had said, and I was very touched - dear Ros. I hope you know all you were and are and will ever be to me. With my love, J."



Kennedy Onassis gave Gilpatric no warning

Gilpatric, too, went on to find someone else, but he and Jackie Kennedy Onassis remained friends, quietly, up to her death in 1994, although in her last years she was frequently escorted by the kindly diamond dealer, Maurice Tempelsman.

Not for Gilpatric the modern practice of betraying the confidences of a lifelong love, of disclosing intimate details of what Jackie had meant to him, no matter the riches he could have garnered.

Samuel Butler, of Gilpatric's Manhattan law firm, Cravath, Swain & Moore, said yesterday that his memorial service at a Madison Avenue church on Friday will be attended by Arthur Schlesinger, President Kennedy's former special assistant. Robert McNamara, Kennedy's Defence Secretary, is also likely to be there, and it is possible that John Kennedy Jr., "Jonjon", whom Gilpatric treated with boys, will pay his last respects to the man who never talked.

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Kohl steps up drive for prompt start to monetary union

FROM ROGER BOYES IN BONN

HELMUT KOHL, the German Chancellor, yesterday went into battle against increasingly Euro-sceptical Germans, the British press and the Social Democratic opposition with a passionate defence of the European Monetary Union timetable.

If monetary union were to fail because of Germany, Herr Kohl said, the country would face "catastrophic consequences". He seemed confident that Britain would eventually join such a union, which he described as "the most decisive process for the present and the next century".

"The City of London will go to Europe, and when the City goes others will follow," the Chancellor pronounced at a

news conference called to set out the Government's position before three regional elections at the weekend. In one of them, Baden-Württemberg in southwest Germany, the timing of monetary union has become a campaign issue, with the Social Democrats urging delay to give job creation top priority.

Herr Kohl, who appeared to lose concentration several times during the 90-minute conference, aimed his lance not only at the Social Democrats but also at Baroness Thatcher. The former Prime Minister haunts the Chancellor's major statements about Europe. If EMU were postponed, he said, investors would begin to doubt the

future of the whole project. Money would thus flow into the mark, further damaging exports.

"The plan to create two million new jobs by the year 2000 depends on exports," Herr Kohl said.

Apparently unaware that Wolfgang Schäuble, his right-hand man in the Christian Democratic Union, has been publicly musing about delaying the single currency, Herr Kohl said Germany's mission was to push ahead with all its strength for a common currency.

Herr Kohl said monetary union was not only about economics but also war and peace. "There can be no political union without monetary union," he said. "That was the fundamental difference between Margaret Thatcher and me." Lady Thatcher's disciples, he said, continued to argue for a separation of the two notions.

The Chancellor's disillusion with British policy on Europe has become all too evident over the past month. Some of the frustration was publicly aired by the Christian Democrats' foreign-policy strategist, Karl Lamers, at a symposium last week. He said that France and Germany had to prevent Britain acting as a spoiler during the inter-governmental conference. "The greater the determination of a small group to unify Europe, the greater will be the appeal of this union for other countries," Dr Lamers said.

While this fairly expresses the Chancellor's views, it masks a more serious concern in Bonn: the continuing inability of the Chancellor to strike up a more personal relationship with President Chirac and rejuvenate the Franco-German axis.

Entry accord: Theo Waigel, the German Finance Minister, yesterday agreed with the three Scandinavian EU members — Denmark, Sweden and Finland — that there could be no dilution of entry criteria for monetary union and that the January 1, 1999, start-up date should not be delayed.

Nicholas Budgen, page 18
Leading article, page 19

Britain finds rare ally in Sweden

BY MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

SWEDEN will be a powerful but reluctant ally to Britain at the inter-governmental conference in Turin next week.

On many of the key issues, ranging from European Union enlargement to reform of the common agricultural policy, this pragmatic nation sees eye to eye with Britain.

The Social Democrat Government approaches Europe from a different ideology and historical tradition. But Göran Persson, who takes over as Prime Minister on Friday, finds much to support in the Conservatives' White Paper. "We do not see Britain as a nay-sayer on everything," Lena Hjelm-Wallen, the Foreign Minister, said in an interview.

But she admitted that Britain's intense ideological debate on federalism and the perceived negative tone towards Europe made it hard for Stockholm, as a new member of the Union, to make common cause in the run-up to Turin.

In Sweden, as in Britain, public opinion sees Brussels as a bogey. Rulings about the

curvature of cucumbers and the size of strawberries have provoked anger and derision.

The Swedish Government has full support, therefore, in opposing an extension of the Commission's competence, and in wanting to make a reality of subsidiarity — the taking of decisions at the lowest practical level. Like Britain, but for different reasons, Sweden is sensitive about sovereignty in defence and foreign affairs.

Sweden strongly supports EU enlargement — especially to include the Baltic states. It backs greater openness, wants to keep the EU open to the outside world, believes in greater competition and sides with the consumer rather than the producer.

Yet in other areas the two countries are in opposite camps. As Ms Hjelm-Wallen made clear, Sweden sees an EU initiative to reduce unemployment as the top priority and wants tougher environmental protection.



Hundreds of Bosnians, flying their flag, stream into Grbavica, which came under Sarajevo's control yesterday

Fires of hate smoulder as Serbs pull out of reunited Sarajevo

BY MICHAEL DYNES

THE city of Sarajevo was reunited yesterday as police of the Muslim-Croat Federation took control of the smouldering streets of Grbavica, the last of the five suburbs occupied by Bosnian Serbs.

Thousands of Sarajevans poured across the city's Bridge of Brotherhood and Unity into its once dangerous neighbourhood, where Serb gunmen delighted in taking pot-shots at passing civilians in the area known as Sniper Alley.

Almost 60,000 Serbs have fled from their five suburbs in the months leading up to the transfer of power to the Muslim-Croat authorities. They looted entire districts and set fire to houses and flats, causing millions of pounds of damage, before their departure. Booby-traps and mines still litter the district, and less than 15 per cent of Sarajevo's Serb population now remains.

The federation police began patrolling Grbavica at dawn, enabling Muslim-Croat firemen to douse the embers of the scores of fires lit by Serb arsonists determined to en-

sure that nothing of value remained as they departed.

Apart from about 2,000 people, mostly elderly, who refused to leave their homes, Grbavica depicted a ghost town. The first task of the federation authorities was to erect a plaque above their make-do headquarters in an abandoned pizzeria since the Serbs had razed the police station during the night.

While a carnival atmosphere prevailed as crowds

celebrated the physical reunification of Sarajevo, the exodus of the Serbs was a potent reminder that Bosnia's once famed tradition of cosmopolitan harmony has probably been lost for ever.

Kris Janowski, the spokesman for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, said: "If anyone thinks this is a success, that would be rather silly." He added: "Millions of dollars worth of property [have been] damaged in

looting and fires, and there has been an exodus at a time when we were supposed to see people returning to their homes."

UN officials have blamed both Serbs and federation authorities for their failure to honour the Dayton agreement's aspiration of resurrecting a multi-ethnic Bosnia-Herzegovina. Serb leaders incited panic among those Serbs who might have stayed, while the Muslim-led Government failed to provide sufficient security for those Serbs who wanted to stay.

At a meeting in Geneva on Monday, Balkan leaders agreed to a 12-point plan to bolster the shaky Muslim-Croat Federation and increase co-operation on handing over war criminals to the UN War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague.

Warren Christopher, the American Secretary of State, who chaired the talks, said the peace process was now entering a new phase, which is expected to culminate in free elections this summer.

War crime suspects held

Vienna: Three men, including one accused of running prison camps, have been arrested in Austria and Germany on suspicion of war crimes in Bosnia, officials said yesterday.

At least two of the arrests, made on Monday, were conducted at the request of the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague.

The United Nations tribunal confirmed that one man was being held in Vienna and

another in Munich, Germany. The Austrian Interior Ministry said these arrests were based on co-operation between German and Austrian authorities.

Both the tribunal and Yugoslavia are seeking the two men's extradition.

German police also detained a third man, a 28-year-old Bosnian Serb accused of beating to death five inmates and maltreating others in a camp in 1992 (AP)

EUROPEAN SUMMARY

US joins attack on Duma

Moscow: America yesterday joined the growing condemnation of the Russian parliament for its Communist-inspired denunciation of the break-up of the Soviet Union (Richard Beston writes).

During a visit to Ukraine, Warren Christopher, the US Secretary of State, gave a warning to Russia's hardliners that the international community would never tolerate any attempt to recreate the Soviet empire.

"Last week's vote in the Russian Duma to reconstitute the Soviet Union was highly irresponsible," he said before meeting President Kuchma.

Gunman targets Russian banker

Moscow: Police beefed up security around Russia's Central Bank after an unidentified gunman, thought to have mafia links, fired at least six pistol shots into the fourth floor apartment of Sergei Dubinin, the bank's newly appointed chairman, in central Moscow (Richard Beston writes).

Berlusconi may quit politics

Rome: Stung by fresh accusations of corruption and the defection of a top aide, Silvio Berlusconi, the media tycoon and Centre-Right leader, threatened to quit politics if he loses next month's election (Richard Owen writes). Signor Berlusconi, Prime Minister in 1994, hopes to return to power. As Forza Italia leader he still dominates Italian politics.

Whale buried at toxic waste site

Copenhagen: A sperm whale found dead off the Danish coast contained so much mercury and cadmium that its intestine had to be buried at a dangerous waste site. The amount of cadmium was 20 times higher and the quantity of mercury double that normally found in fish. (Reuters)

Prince and the showman team up

FROM BEN MACINTYRE AND SUSAN BELL IN PARIS

THE nephew of the King of Saudi Arabia went into partnership with the King of Pop in Paris yesterday as billionaire investor Prince al-Walid bin Talal and American pop star Michael Jackson announced the launch of a global entertainment company dedicated to promoting "traditional family values".

Kingdom Entertainment will finance Mr Jackson's concert tours and forge a range of other entertainment projects including music and film production, children's cartoons, theme parks, restaurants, hotels and merchandising of the pop star's image.

The two men yesterday signed a contract to launch what they called "the most significant business breakthrough for the 21st century" before a packed press conference in the Palais de Congrès in Paris.

The unlikely partnership between one of the world's richest men and one of the world's oddest will combine the prince's business acumen and vast financial assets with Mr Jackson's status as a pop icon. The singer described the project as "a long-awaited dream come true," while



Michael Jackson and Prince al-Walid at the launch of their entertainment company in Paris yesterday

Prince al-Walid praised his new partner as "a skillful businessman, creative strategist and humanitarian". The pop star said he had been inspired to become involved "in all facets of the multimedia explosion" while on tour. "I was made privy to the heartbeats of millions of fans who willingly shared with me their hopes, loves, fears and, most importantly, their desire for a better life," he said.

In what might be seen as an oblique reference to Mr Jackson's strange and short marriage to Lisa Marie Presley, one of the possible projects

outlined yesterday was a "virtual reality wedding chapel" — a theme park ride in which users confront marital problems such as infidelity, jealousy and misunderstanding.

Mr Jackson has designed a logo for Kingdom Entertainment made up of a sword (representing unity) plunging into a mountain (signifying humanity's struggle to excel) in front of a gateway (reflecting hope). The two men made an incongruous pair as they announced the formation of the new company. Prince al-Walid wore a sober grey suit, while Mr Jackson sported a

red military-style jacket with silver armband and gold epaulettes.

The American-educated nephew of King Fahd and head of United Saudi Commercial Bank has carved out a reputation as one of the world's most audacious investors, specialising in high-risk, high-return projects. Mr Jackson, who has settled child molestation accusations out of court, clearly falls into this category.

When asked about Mr Jackson's turbulent recent history the prince's adviser, Dr Khalid al-Mansour, said Prince al-Walid "would never risk his reputation" if he were not convinced of Jackson's "good character". Dr Mansour also said that the "most exhaustive studies" were carried out before launching the project, in which Jackson and Prince al-Walid are equal partners.

The prince's talent for financial gambles was recently demonstrated when he bailed out the now-profitable Disneyland theme park outside Paris. Last year a consortium of which Prince al-Walid owns 10 per cent gained control of the Canary Wharf property project for \$1.2 billion (£784 million) and he is also reportedly keen to buy the Savoy Hotel in London.

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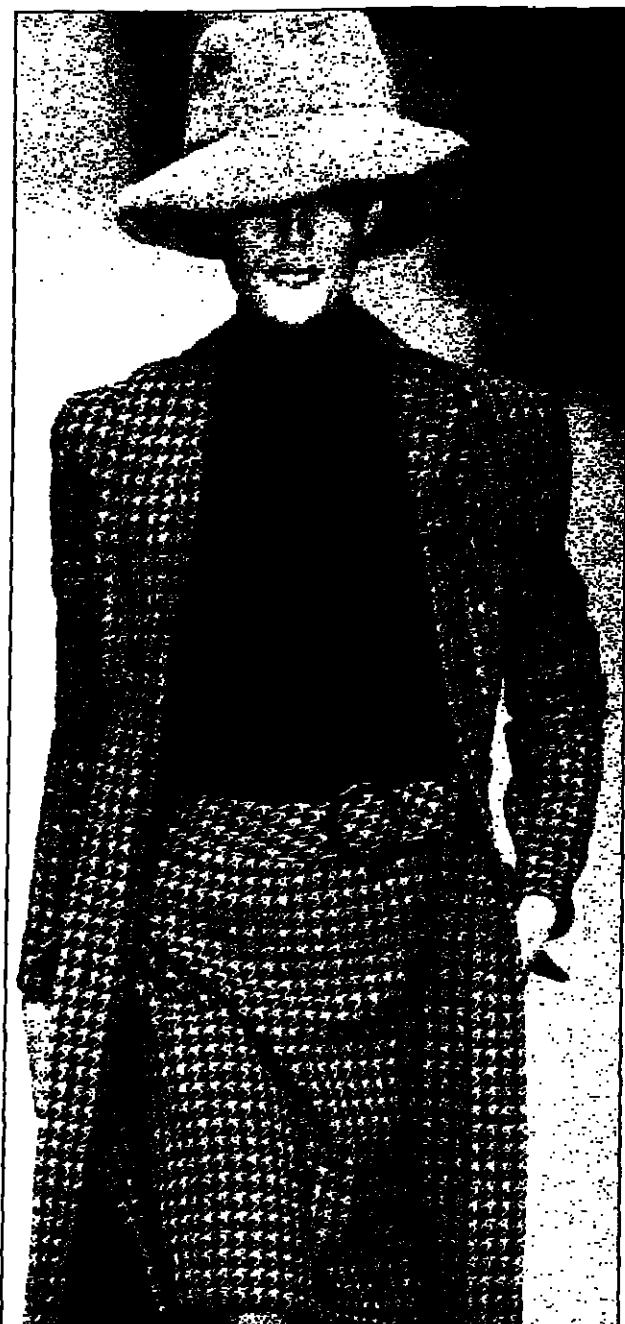
PARIS

Iain R. Webb
finds Gallic
flair in short
supply on the
catwalks

Paris is the capital of fashion. Everybody knows that. Everybody, it seems, except the slew of designers who paraded their autumn/winter 1996-97 collections last week in ... Paris.

To say that this season's showings were a disappointment is an understatement. From a schedule of more than 80 shows there were few to write home about. A mere handful deserve rave reviews. Worth a mention are Martine Sitbon's Milford Sisters silhouette (neat three-quarter coats over knee-length A-line skirts) in a mix of tweed, leather, knit and velvet; the ultra-understatement of Narciso Rodriguez at Cerruti, who offered slimline tailoring and black jersey evening dresses held up with slivers of silver; the colourful and eclectic ethnic looks of Dries van Noten; Sonia Rykiel's sexy black lace and soignée suits; superfine knits worn under military-precision cut coats at Hermès; the fast-paced show of Rifat Ozbek featuring flowing kaftans in sombre black or multicoloured jersey; and Peter O'Brien at Rochas, who showed only evening wear. La Belle Époque meets Empress Josephine.

From the cutting edge, Yohji Yamamoto and Helmut Lang made great shows. Yamamoto layered long chunky knits in subdued shades of khaki, milk chocolate, grey and rust. Golden wool cut into giant-sized coats and military-style trouser suits and pastel-coloured fur trims gave a shock of the new to his trademark black and ivory looks. Lang also stuck with his clean-cut silhouette, colouring it olive green, flesh pink, canary yellow and black. Sequins worn under filmy knit dresses, quilted silky coats and a lacquered lace trail on curvy sunshine-



VALENTINO: Tweedy suits are updated with colour

bright dresses added gloss to the otherwise strict collection.

Someone should tell John Galiano his clothes would be better served up in a straightforward manner. Both shows (his eponymous line and his collection for Givenchy) suffered from models who overacted in locations which overpowered. Did we really need to go to an industrial estate on the outskirts of Paris or a polo club in the Bois de Boulogne to see what were in fact fabulous clothes (frothy

and frilly dresses at Givenchy, tailoring sharp as an arrowhead at Galiano) worn by hammy supermodels?

It was left to three established names to bring joy to the fashion world. Yves Saint Laurent, Valentino and Karl Lagerfeld at Chanel offered much-needed Parisian chic.

Saint Laurent still makes slick fashion which flatters — tunics over trousers, a leopard-print trenchcoat, little black dresses and sweeping black skirts which look equally good worn with sequins or a suitably smart jacket.

Valentino and Lagerfeld gave colourful tweedy suits a touch of glamour with lace shirts and Lurex trims respectively. Columns of shadowy chiffon were common to both as were fine sweaters worn with sparkling lace skirts. Lagerfeld added military styling, khaki fatigues and black velvet, while Valentino trimmed suits and coats with fur and looked to India for a finale of sari-draped dresses.

Paris fashion may not be in crisis, but this season it just didn't cut it.



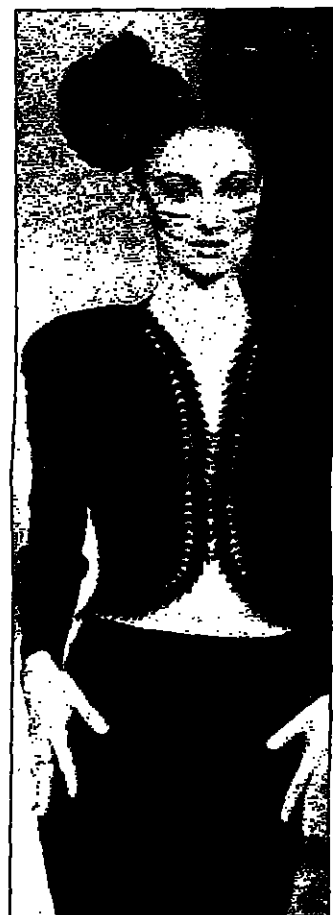
YVES SAINT LAURENT: Still offering that special Parisian chic



CHANEL: Sparkling Lurex provides a touch of glamour



YAMAMOTO: Golden



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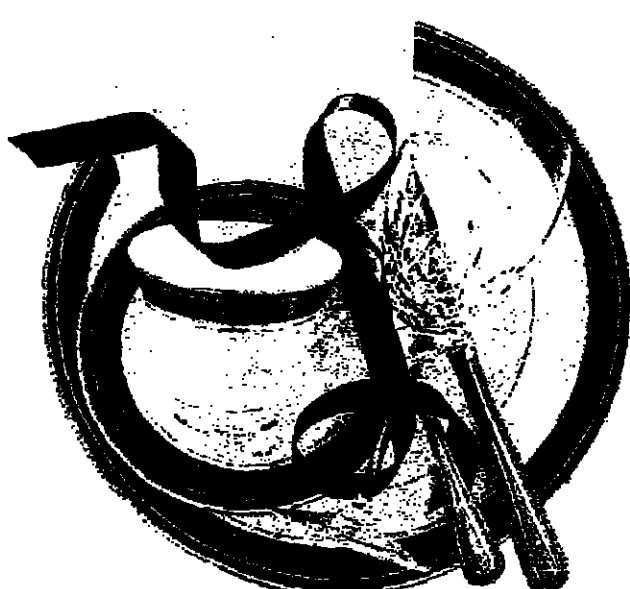
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Why are we so scared of the V-chip?

Honestly, there is just no pleasing some people. By the number and volume of voices raised in querulous dismay at the distant prospect — remotely distant at that — of the so-called V-chip, you could be forgiven for thinking that what was being proposed was the greatest assault on reason, nature, free will, morality and practicality. You name it, this device offends it.

And what is, exactly, being proposed? That we should consider the possibilities and practicalities of a computer chip which is designed to scramble programmes, deemed by some agreed-upon ratings system, to be inappropriate for children to watch.

One might reasonably expect such an initiative to be welcomed, even if cautiously. There is as much of a consensus as there could be about anything that children should be protected from excessive violence, in life as in art. And yet any attempt to see how this could be done is met with contemptuous sneering: can't work, won't work, is the barked response.

But are we wrong, then, even to consider it? In a leading article in *The Times* yesterday, the V-chip was quickly, though calmly, shown to be flawed. That it certainly is. Perfect solutions exist only in the minds of maniacs. It is, of course, right to examine those flaws, because if they palpably outweigh the possible benefits, then the whole exercise is a waste of time.

The objections commonly put up, by all commentators, seem to be led by the concern that most parents aren't very good at all this new technology business and can't even set the video without their children's help. How, then, are they ever going to manage to wield this technological tool, firstly with competence

Ignore the hysteria — plans for a censorship button on your TV make good sense



Nigella Lawson

and secondly without having it turned fiendishly against them by their far more computer-literate offspring?

It is an interesting objection, though. For what it reveals is that behind most people's attempts at reasonable concern lies a hysterical fear of technology. This is a common fear, and the memory of abject terror in the eyes of many of my colleagues as newspapers were computerised reminds me how widespread it is.

People feel they can't use the new technology because they mistakenly presume they are meant to understand it. They confuse the ability to use a computer with the skill of knowing how to program a computer. I suspect, too, that people feel that a degree of

techno-ignorance shows a more cultured, rarefied sensibility. People really do boast about not being able to program a video recorder as if it reflected well upon them.

All you need to do is follow instructions, press a few buttons. It's not a very entertaining exercise, but it's not difficult. I put people who won't set an idiot-proof VHS in the same category as those who make it their business not to know how to put on a washing machine. It's easier if someone else does it.

The other leading concern is similarly tinged with paranoia. Might not the ability to stop children watching violent programmes lead the programme-makers to be yet more irresponsible and insouciant about churning out violence? Well, possibly. But it seems to me just as possible, maybe more likely, that television producers might consider decreasing the amount of violence in the programmes they are making, if they feel that violent programmes will be blocked.

A censoring chip in the television set at home might jolt the programme-makers into realising that if they want their programmes to be watched by the maximum number of people, then it makes sense, it pays, to keep the violence down. I don't recommend muzzle-brained naivety (I am, after all, as cynical as the next journalist) but sometimes it is better to be beguiled by hope rather than fear, at least in the first instance.

I like the idea of some sort of censoring facility available to us, privately, at home. No, it isn't a perfect solution and no, it doesn't address the real issue, which is the alarming amount of violence-as-entertainment around (although it is to films, rather than television that we should turn our



Not in front of the children? The V-chip would enable parents to make sure that films such as *Cape Fear* were censored

admonishing gaze in this respect, but it offers a practical, partial remedy.

The technology is bound to improve, too. I am not so keen about some preordained system of what is allowable and what might not be, but just as Sky subscribers could buy into the Bruno-Tyson match,

so it must be possible, with a little ingenuity and the incentive to do so, to be able to choose to desubscribe to certain programmes.

Yes, feckless parents aren't going to exert themselves here, but the best we can ever hope for is to provide some tool, some aid, for those who

are concerned. We can't be sure of being able to protect our children from all unsuitable material, but that shouldn't discourage people from doing what they can.

There is no point being all-or-nothing on this one. Who wouldn't rather we lived in a world where people being

shot, knifed, blown-up or otherwise mutilated and killed wasn't seen as toothsome entertainment? But in the absence of a pacific Utopia, I greet with cautious but nonetheless welcoming interest a device which saves me from having it beamed, at least, into my own home.

Weak voice of the nation

THE strengths of BBC Radio are encapsulated by Radio 4, the single best broadcaster of programmes one's dial could ever fall upon.

I can be spirited away from it, but not for long. I like to listen to the radio when driving and find that Radio 4 is the only station I can think of which makes one sorry to end a car journey; indeed, it often keeps me behind the wheel of my car long after I have reached my destination.

But it is at the moment doing something silly: it is making a point of using people who cannot broadcast. There seem to be more and more of those little taped inserts in programmes, narrated by people who are unable to talk.

I'm not talking about regional accents or even, particularly, sloppy diction, but about the merest ability to project and modulate the voice.

For radio, a good voice is not an extra, it is the basic tool of the trade. Every time I've been in the car recently I seem to find myself trapped by someone with a reedy, weak, unattractive voice, who reads a script as if he is reading a script.

Worse, those who are so afflicted make their disabilities more evident by filling their script with ponderous rhetorical questions, which they pose with a pantomime but still wooden attempt at an interrogative sweep, and self-referential stabs at irony. It's embarrassing.

What the BBC has got wrong is in thinking that making the job available to those without the aptitude to do it makes it somehow more accessible. While it might do just that as far as prospective employees are concerned, it has the opposite effect on those who are its putative listeners.

It might well make the plumbing business more accessible if those without the aptitude, training or ability were allowed to ply the trade, but no one would want to employ a plumber who couldn't plumb. Why should it be any different with broadcasting?

Cape Cod's professor of cleaning

Louise Rafkin's mother used to swell with pride when friends asked after her daughter's progress. "She's doing so well!" everyone would agree. These days, her mother is not so sure, for Louise has quit academe to become a charwoman.

As a career move it may sound like an old warplane, smoke trailing from its engines, plummeting to the earth. But listen to Miss Rafkin and you start to see it differently. Life as a cleaning woman is, she says, more satisfying than as a college lecturer — and more lucrative.

Miss Rafkin, 37, who vacuums in the Cape Cod area, took an MA in comparative literature from the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her thesis was in modish French literary criticism, post-Derrida. She became a lecturer at the University of Auckland, in New Zealand,

Quentin Letts talks to an unhappy academic who found joy in scrubbing other people's floors

and later returned to a position at her alma mater.

Her days were spent discussing Afro-American literature with undergraduates or debating lecture policy with colleagues. In the evenings she went home, stressed, to mark essays.

One day she realised she was not enjoying it. "I really don't think I was a very good teacher, so I stopped," she says. There was still the rent to pay, so she became a char. "I'm really good at cleaning. I am thorough and fast and I enjoy leaving a clean house behind. I keep my own house pretty darned neat."

The brush and bucket bring more job satisfaction than the intellectual life or faculty poli-

tics. "Cleaning offers more tangible results. If you want to get something bleached, it happens," she says. The money is better, too. As a lecturer she struggled to get by, but as a cleaner, given the food-miser speed at which she operates, her earnings can approach £33 an hour.

Cleanliness really is next to godliness, she claims. "In the States these days, nearly everyone seems to have a cleaner. As a result, Americans do not value cleaning. They just leave a mess, knowing someone is going to clean it up."

As a child, Louise dreamt of becoming a spy. Life as a char is full of secrets. She has found whisky bottles in the guest bathroom shower and behind the tumble dryer, and has swept up losing dockets from the floor of a compulsive gambler. From the debris of people's bedrooms and the contents of their bathroom cabinets she can detect the state of their love lives. "I know them even if I never meet them."

Couples sometimes argue in front of her — it is only the cleaner, after all — and she has been lured in to petty confidences, such as the times a woman lied to her husband, then winked conspiratorially. She is Mata Hari with a mop. Few of her clients are aware



Louise Rafkin earns more as a char than as a lecturer

of her unorthodox career path, although once she could not resist scribbling some literary comments about a client's book collection at the bottom of a domestic note she left pinned to the kitchen door. It is not every day you return home to a note along the lines of "More Vim need-

ed for bathroom please. NB. You seem strong in Strindberg, but deficient in Dumas. Please see me next time to ask for a reading list."

Not all clients want a char cleverer than themselves — once she was released from her duties by an employer uneasy about being upstaged

intellectually. Many of us have been known to clean up a little before the char arrives. If the char is an egghead, that pressure must be greater.

And yet Miss Rafkin is no saint. She has been known to graze on the contents of an employer's refrigerator, and once, when surprised at work by a newish lover, did the unspeakable there and then. A prudish male client fired her when, on a terribly hot day, he returned early to find her scrubbing the floor in shorts and bra. She has tried on clients' make-up and devised nicknames for some couples — the Sheddars, for instance, are a couple who are both losing their hair.

Acquaintances from university days are told on a need-to-know basis about her new life. "I hesitate before telling them, even though this is a perfect thing for me," says Miss Rafkin. The family — mother is a teacher, father is a pharmacist and her brother is a golf pro — are slowly getting used to her new occupation, though it has been "a little awkward" for her mother.

The embarrassment will become all the greater if she finds a publisher for her book (*Dust to Dust: A Cleaning Odyssey*). "I suppose it would be easier for my mother if I was writing a book about bird-watching or Greek architecture," she says. "But what you have to realise is that people I know, my contemporaries, are locked into jobs with £30,000 a year and two weeks' holiday. I can take months off if I want."

INSIDE SECTION

2

Maestro in distress: why today's top conductors simply don't measure up to their great forerunners, and are now paying the price in diminished status
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Alan Coren



■ Twinkle, twinkle, little star, how I wonder if you are

Barring accidents, I know what I shall be looking at at half-past nine on Friday night. This is not just because half-past nine falls between the end of *Cybill* and the beginning of *Roseanne*, when the only other thing to be looking at would be the ghastly *Father Ted*; it is also because half-past nine is when Hyakutake, all authorities agreed, will be looking at its best for those looking at it with, for the first time, the naked eye. Whether Hyakutake will be better to look at than *Father Ted*, mind, depends on one thing: it depends on whether I can see it. For seeing Hyakutake is quite different from looking at it.

I know this, because I have looked at comets before. Only last summer, urged on by delicious astrophilic hoo-ha, I sat in the garden looking at Hale-Bopp. After a bit, my wife came out and inquired where it was. I told her it was there, right next to Jupiter, give or take the odd light-year, and pointed. She asked me whether I was sure that that was Jupiter. I asked her what else it could be. She said it could be Mars. I asked if it was red enough for Mars, because I know almost everything about Mars, and she said how red Mars has to be, and since that is one of the few things I don't know about Mars, we came inside again and looked at *Newsnight* instead. This does not mean, of course, that I did not see Hale-Bopp. I may well have done.

Hyakutake should be easier. That is because it is going to appear just below the Big Dipper, and I know where the Big Dipper is. I know almost everything about the Big Dipper, and, as if that were not enough, I am constantly learning more, because I do try to remain at astronomy's cutting edge. Recently, for example, I learnt that the Big Dipper was not two-dimensional, as had hitherto been believed, at least by me: those seven stars, or is it eight, are not actually on the same plane at all, they are untemperamentally years away from one another, ie, at seven (eight?) different depths. People on another planet, looking at the Big Dipper from, eg, above, would not see a Big Dipper at all, they might see a Big Horse, or a Big Banjo, while those on planets underneath it might not see a Big anything, just stars.

I have, by the way, already looked at Hyakutake, but only through field-glasses. Indeed, you may have done the same, because its accessibility to the binocular was reported in Monday's *Times*, and you may have been out there, too, that night, provided your sky was as clear as it was, briefly, over Cricklewood. I don't know whether I saw it, of course, but one fascinating astronomical thought did at least result from the attempt: when you look at something, say, ten light years away through 10x binoculars, does it then become only one light year away, and, if so, do you become ten times younger while you are looking at it? I ran inside and put this to my wife, who said that you became ten times younger only to the people on the thing you were looking at. I tried to press her on this, but she had unaccountably gone back to sleep.

I cannot blame her, you are either passionate about the heavens or you are not. For myself, they often come close to driving me crazy. They tease us out of thought as doth eternity, to quote the man who no less elegantly informed us that he felt like some watcher of the skies when a new planet swims into his ken, a simile suggesting that Keats had a considerably smarter ken than mine, otherwise how would he know what it felt like to spot a new planet swimming in it? How one envies him, standing on his nocturnal patio in whatever Keats Grove was called then and identifying all that stuff unerringly as it sparkled or flitted above him! Never mind simultaneously differentiating the noise of a nightingale from the welter of other cheeping coming off Hampstead Heath, I can just about do a cuckoo, and even then I'm never certain it isn't somebody's clock.

But for all that, I shall be out there on Friday night, suitably (in every sense) anoraked, a bottle of Glenfiddich in one fist and *The Observer Book of the Night Sky* in the other, looking out at something. Whether it turns out to be Hyakutake, of course, remains to be seen.



Can Johnny Rotten make a comeback?

Labour isn't frightening

John Major has only one hope: to create a specific and dire fear of what Britain would be like under Tony Blair

Lunch recently at a Tory newspaper saw its editor seized by a fit of morality. He asked his guests which party they thought ought to win the next election. The answer was eerily unanimous. Labour should. Views were variously that ministers were exhausted, Tony Blair's party deserved an innings, Britain needed a change of faces, and democracy required fair play. Nobody could think of a single reason for returning the present Cabinet to power.

Such arguments might test the loyalty of a philosopher, and even an editor, but they cause no trouble to a politician. There may be rumours of some ministers praying for an election defeat and a lucrative rest, but most would like to win. Government is more fun than Opposition. A politician may sometimes play idealist, but mostly he must play alley cat. Today is alley-cat day for John Major. The Cabinet is to discuss not lofty idealism, a referendum on Europe or nursery vouchers, but how to win the next election. It will discuss dirty.

An understandable recklessness is creeping into Mr Major's tactics. Two years ago, the ranks of London punditry declared that he would not lead the Conservative Party into the next election. He told them they were wrong by putting his leadership to the vote and winning. The same ranks had predicted that he would not win the 1992 election, for much the same reasons as those listed above. He won 14.1 million votes, as against Margaret Thatcher's 13.7 million in 1987. Fighting is one of Mr Major's political qualities, and he has not lost a serious fight yet.

Today he might be tempted to block his ears to his colleagues and heed only his intuition. So-called political Cabinet meetings are mostly a waste of time and often a shambles. They comprise a round of saloon-bar fanfaries, with no competent civil servants present to make sure ministers do what they say should be done. Discussion is dominated by polls and the press, and collective paranoia is generated on both topics.

The polls are now telling Mr Major that while the "feel-good factor" may have done something for Margaret Thatcher, it is doing nothing for him. The supposed equation of economic optimism with support for the Government no longer holds. It is an article of faith propounded by the high priest of Tory electioneering, Maurice Saatchi, that rising prosperity seeps through into

economic optimism and then into support for the Government. All ministers have to do is wait. Another article of faith, propounded by Robert Worcester of MORI, holds that this relationship ended on Black Wednesday. The middle classes no longer see the Conservatives as the party of economic competence. Those days are over.

At present the economy appears to be prospering and on a solid foundation, yet there is no sign of the feel-good factor (expressed as optimism for the coming year) rising with it. Certainly there is no sign of increased support for the Government. The number of people who think the economy will improve is smaller now than it was in March 1994, despite all Kenneth Clarke's recent protestations. In addition, Labour's lead is back up above 30 points, aided by the disintegration — always dangerous for the Tories — of support for the Liberal Democrats.

In my view, little of this material is "news you can use" for politicians. The feel-good question is yet another proxy (along with local elections and surveys of hypothetical voting intention) for vaguely pro- or anti-Government sentiment. It is a message-question with minimal predictive significance. As David Butler wrote after the 1992 poll debacle, "any attempt to predict the future depends on its resembling the past", adding that "there is no reason to suppose that this will always be the case". The feel-good question was seen as a way round the implausibility of the hypothetical voting question. Yet it too is vulnerable to changing attitudes by respondents to wards pollsters, and to any change in the meaning ascribed to words.

What do emerge from the polls are specific answers to image questions: such as that Mr Major cannot hope to appeal to the electorate's nobler sentiments. He is no longer trusted. Mr Blair is now the beneficiary of whatever

nobility of sentiment the electorate possesses, above all that of fair play. A Labour victory is beginning to connote curiosity, novelty, even anticipation. To some Tory voters, loyal for 17 years, the prospect of a Labour government is like that of a sneak holiday in Bangkok. The reality may not equal the promise and may not bear repeating, but time is slipping by and you only live once.

There can only be one response to this from Mr Major. He must abandon any thought of fighting fair. He needs to tell the electorate that nasty things happen on holidays in Bangkok for which even the NHS has no cure. If the pollsters are right and nobody believes the Government's promises — on taxation, on school standards, on crime, even on Europe — they must come to distrust Labour's promises even more. The one poll finding that offers hope for the Tories is that the middle classes

are suspicious of Labour's pledge to protect prosperity. Mr Major needs to create a fear of Labour that is specific and dire.

One of the many ironies of British politics is that Mr Blair has already anticipated this tactic and erected his defence. If voters are sceptical about Labour's fiscal responsibility, then it will be responsible or nothing. Shadow Cabinet members emerge from meetings fuming and declaring Gordon Brown worse than the real Treasury. Nothing is permitted that might risk the charge of higher spending or taxation. Mr Blair sees the danger. For many middle-income voters, Labour still suggests a return to recklessness, to the uncoordinated bribery of interest groups, to inflation and industrial chaos. Labour has paid Mr Major the compliment of pre-empting an attack on its weakest flank.

The Tories are vulnerable on this

score. Their Government is bigger than Labour's ever was, their taxes are higher, their regulators more intrusive and their centralisation more intense. But fighting dirty requires no reference to one's own record. Mr Major must simply ram home the message that whatever the voter thinks of government now, Labour will make it worse. (I recall a Jamaican election slogan: "So who you want rob you: me or de other guy?") Mr Major must revive the politics of fear. Here his capitulation to Mr Clarke on rate-capping was a tactical error. A burst of squandermania by a handful of Labour cities would have been a gift to "You can't trust Labour" campaigning. I am told Labour strategists broke open the champagne when Mr Clarke and the Policy Unit won this battle against Michael Heseltine and the libertarians.

The lesson of electioneering the world over is that the effective campaign is the negative one. If Mr Major is to have any hope of success, a black cloud must gather over the branch on which Mr Blair's smile is now sitting. He will have to conjure an image of a Blairite Britain in which every job is threatened by positive discrimination, every school by political correctness, every marriage by pension splitting. He has to resurrect the dark demons of the North, the council union bosses, the direct labour mafias, Red Ted and Red Ken, the Greenham Common women, the students who demand grants with menaces and throw paint. New Labour must be called old Labour, because the Shadow Cabinet is old Labour. The tale of winter 1978-79 must be retold. Twenty-five per cent inflation must be recalled. These veterans must all be conscripted to the colours. As Mr Major inspects their ranks, he must hope they scare the enemy more than him.

In the 1950s, the Tories portrayed Labour as a party of prewar prejudice and postwar austerity. When Wilson declared his own new Labour in 1963, the Conservatives derided it as old Labour in disguise — and almost won the 1964 election. Labour scraped home. After six years of government, the charge was widely recognised as true, and the Tories returned to power. Mr Major has to portray new Labour as the party of the Seventies, because he now cannot afford to do otherwise. This is the most plausible fear, the politics of the big scare.

And if the tactic does not work for the next election, it should at least set things up for the one after that.

EU law must be disobeyed

Nicholas Budgen on Europe's would-be supreme court

On Thursday, the Commons will look again at the Government's modest proposals for the inter-governmental conference on Europe. Discussion of the recent White Paper shows how little room there is for manoeuvre. There will be even less room if Britain makes further concessions and compromises. So how do we loosen our ties with a half-federal Europe? It seems to me that the most likely and most effective means is by disobeying the European Court of Justice.

The most fundamental British repudiation of EU law so far occurred over the use of the drug Emtril in game birds. In January, Austin Mitchell asked the Minister of Agriculture what plans he had to enforce a regulation banning the use of Emtril in treating game birds. To which the minister replied: "The UK believes that such products can be used safely and, pending discussions with the European Commission, no action has been taken to withdraw the marketing authorisation for them."

This is believed to be the first time that the British Government has publicly said that it is prepared to ignore a European law. It may be that other EU countries turn a blind eye to European legislation, but in the past the British have been scrupulous in treating European law with the same importance as domestic law.

Yet we have recently seen a number of important expressions of a new attitude. Patrick Jenkin asked Nicholas Soames: "On what basis does my honourable friend suppose that the provisions of the EC Equal Treatment Directive do not apply to the Armed Forces?" Soames replied: "I'm sorry but this EC nonsense is way beyond me. I do not understand."

Tony Baldry, the Fisheries Minister, described the recent decision of the European Court in the Factortame case as "crazy". Norman Lamont described the same decision, albeit with a little circumlocution, as "balls". In an interview in *The Times*, John Redwood said: "I would like the Government to assert parliamentary independence... It should say that on this occasion we are not complying with the judgment."

Last week the Prime Minister called European legislation such as the Working Time Directive "ludicrous". He spoke of European "stupidities" and "nonsense". Yesterday he attacked the European Court for beginning to become a European "supreme court", and in reply to Mr Redwood he left open the possibility that Britain might disobey its rulings if the social chapter is forced upon us under the health and safety provisions of the EU treaties.

There are many reasons to respect the law. A most important reason is self-interest. We obey the laws which protect others because we hope that others in their turn will obey laws which protect us. But the Italians failed for a long time to implement the system of milk quotas, and when they were fined by the court they refused to pay the fine. I doubt whether the rule of law is frequently discussed in the taverns of Sicily.

In our parliamentary system, law can and should be made slowly and with every opportunity for interested parties to influence the result by discussion and argument. If we fail under our system, we at least believe that our arguments have been heard and may even prevail in the future.

But the procedure by which European law is made is quite different. The Commission proposes the legislation. The Council of Ministers has a right to object and amend. In practice, the law-making procedure is private, arbitrary and unjust. The citizen of Europe feels he has no control over his European masters.

There is also no fear of enforcement. There are no EU policemen, no EU army. If you claim for too many ewes under the sheep regime, you may have your collar felt by the British police. But if the British Government fails to implement the regime, there are no Euro-police to enforce the law against either our Government or the subjects of the Queen. Above all, there is no Euro-army to enforce a law against a member state. We cannot have in Europe the equivalent of the American Civil War.

What this year's inter-governmental conference (IGC) will demonstrate is that there is no proper procedure in Europe for the amendment of treaties. When people disapprove of a British law, they can work through our system to change it. This is part of the system of consent to democracy.

On March 5, Douglas Hogg promised: "In particular, we shall be exploring at the IGC whether there are treaty changes which could be made which would help to ensure that the fishing opportunities arising from national quotas provide real benefit to the fishing communities of the flag member state." But we must expect that the Spanish will veto any such proposals. In any event, the conference is not a fundamental review of the treaties: it is a mere "5,000-mile service" for Maastricht.

The EU is at present a half-formed federal structure. It offers neither sovereignty to the member states, nor a system of defined roles and checks and balances. If we cannot change the treaty, we can at least defy the judicial messengers. It may be dangerous to defy the court. But it may be the only way to demonstrate that we want a looser relationship with our European friends.

The author is Conservative MP for Wolverhampton South-West, and a practising barrister.

Pope eternal

ALEXANDER POPE's grotto, the network of dank, subterranean caverns where the great poet and satirist went to write and brood, is up for sale. Arguably the most important artificial hideaway in literary history lies underneath St Catherine's Convent in Twickenham, which is being sold by the Sisters of Mercy for £1.5 million.

The decision to sell the convent, which stands on the site of Pope's villa, has prompted a race to secure the Thames-side property as a museum in his memory. A

number of parties are understood to have plans to redevelop the site, but the Thames Landscape Strategy Partnership has proposed an international landscape study centre as the centrepiece of a bid for more than £20 million of millennium cash.

"It is the greatest grotto in the world," says Kim Wilkie, who drew up the scheme. "In many ways it is where the landscape movement began. Pope sat in there and came up with the ideas of man and nature and man and

place which have stayed with us ever since."

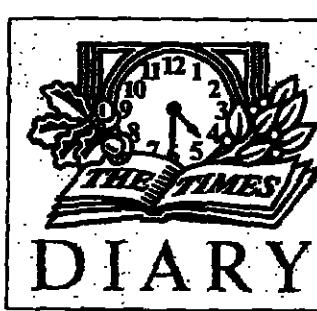
Pope lined the walls of the grotto with semi-precious stones, shells and mirrors, and it was here that he liked to entertain his friend Jonathan Swift. The villa itself was torn down in the last century when the owner got fed up with the constant procession of gawping Popeans.

She may be feeling the pinch at the moment, but the Duchess of York splashed out on a swimming-pool party on Monday for Princess Eugenie's sixth birthday. Fergie and friends took 20 children to a water park in Bracknell, Berkshire, where the children frolicked with the public. The Duchess was unusually restrained and decided to forgo a swim, but the detectives dived in.

Peace envoys

CHURCHES in London and Chichester will echo to the sweet oriental tones of the 40-strong Hiroshima Boys' Choir, which is visiting Britain for the first time at the end of the month. The choir, dedicated to world friendship and peace, has a wide repertoire, from native nursery rhymes to European classics, and is renowned for its version of Yesterday.

Their Japanese inflection is a



delight," says Gordon Hazzard, an organiser of the visit. "It's a bit like hearing an attractive French girl talking in English."

The inquiry into how Yorkshire Water dealt with last summer's drought was temporarily delayed yesterday when the company's managing director, Trevor Newton, pointed to the tumbler by his side and announced that he had run out of water.

Sweaty issue

MICHAEL HOWARD is to have a smart addition to his wardrobe. The dapper Home Secretary has won a spanking new sweatshirt for having the star letter in the homeless magazine *The Big Issue*. He wrote a lengthy missive on the Government's new procedures for asylum-seekers — so lengthy

that it took up the entire letters page and wiped out all competition for the prize.

New innings

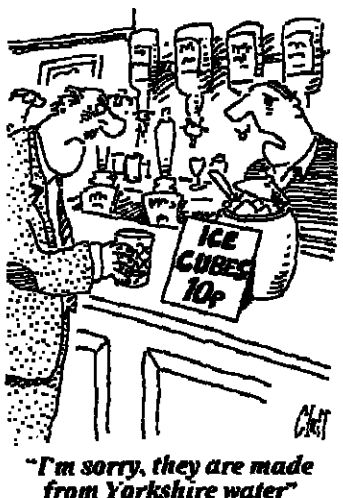
THE ANCIENT Hampshire tavern regarded as the cradle of English cricket has been reclaimed by lovers of the game after a bitter struggle with modernising forces. The Bat & Ball Inn on Broadhalfpenny Down, Hambledon, which has been refreshing players since professional teams were started up in the area in the mid-18th century, has been out of favour with

the cricket establishment since the decision in 1993 to rename the hostile Natterjacks at the Bat & Ball and promote it as a restaurant.

The Bat & Ball Cricket Club, which boasts John Major and Dennis Silk, the TCCB chairman, among its number, was furious, and Brian Johnson declared shortly before he died that he would never drink the inn's beer again. Fans stayed away in droves and now the owners, Allied Domecq, have caved in. This week the "Natterjacks" signs come down ready for the new season. "I'm delighted," says David Gower, a regular. "It's idyllic and a visit is a tradition of the English summer."

Nomination

A CURIOUS thing about Peter Hall's production of the Feydeau farce *Occupe-toi d'Amelie*, while the play, starring Felicity Kendal, is to be called *Mind Millie For Me* in London, it is billed for its West End tour as *Emily Needs Attention*. So are regional audiences being patronised? "Emily Needs Attention" was the working title for the play," says a representative of the show. "The regional publicity material had to be printed when that was still being used."



"I'm sorry, they are made from Yorkshire water"



Far from grotty: the Twickenham addition

Bias principle and public bodies

Regina v Secretary of State for the Environment and Another, Ex parte Kirkstall Valley Campaign Ltd
Before Mr Justice Sedley
[Judgment March 6]

The principle that a person was disqualified from participation in a decision if there was a real danger of bias from a pecuniary or personal interest in the outcome was of general application in public law and was not limited to judicial or quasi-judicial bodies or proceedings.

Mr Justice Sedley so held in the Queen's Bench Division when dismissing an application by Kirkstall Valley Campaign Ltd, a community action group concerned about the development of Kirkstall Valley in Leeds, for a judicial review of the decision of the Leeds Development Corporation on July 21 1994 to grant planning permission for retail development in the form of a supermarket on a rugby pitch in the valley belonging to the Headingley Football Club and the reserved matters decision of March 29, 1995. William Morrison Supermarket plc, which had bought the land to which the challenged decisions related in the expectation of benefiting by the planning consent, appeared as the second respondent.

The applicants claimed that one or both decisions were vitiated by personal interest amounting to an apparent bias on the part of three members and an officer of the corporation.

A planning application had been put forward in 1993 by Kirkstall Valley Properties Ltd for a proposed retail and housing development scheme but that scheme was abandoned as non-viable in 1995. By that date, however, the corporation had entertained and approved a compromise scheme, the subject of the present application.

It was not alleged that the scheme was unlawful but that the decisions taken by the corporation were so contaminated by the undeclared interests of members in earlier decisions that they could not stand.

These interests included the corporation chairman's ownership of land in Shadwell to which the rugby club was interested in moving, provided it sold its site in the valley, and other corporation members' links with the rugby club.

Mr John Hobson and Mr Paul Stinchcombe for the applicants, Mr Richard Drabble, QC, Mr David Elvin and Mr John Utton for the secretary of state, Mr Gerard Ryan, QC and Mr Jonathan Milner for the second respondent.

MR JUSTICE SEDLEY said that the application raised ques-

tions of some importance about the obligation of members of a statutory corporation to abstain from participation in the corporation's proceedings when matters arose in which they had a pecuniary or personal interest.

The corporation came into being under Part XVI of the Local Government Planning and Land Act 1980 in June 1988 and became the local planning authority for all but strategic purposes in lieu of Leeds City Council. It was eventually wound up in July 1995, its successor being the Secretary of State for the Environment.

An urban development corporation was comprised of a chairman, a vice-chairman and between five and 11 members appointed by the secretary of state bearing in mind their special knowledge of the area.

Although counsel for the secretary of state had accepted the applicant's submission that the governing proposition on apparent bias was to be found in the decision of the House of Lords in *R v Gough* (1993) AC 646, counsel for the second respondent had submitted that non-judicial bodies such as an urban development corporation were governed by a different set of principles to be found in a succession of cases beginning with *R v Severend's District Council*, *Ex parte Terry* (1985) 3 All ER 226.

If that submission were right the question to be asked in relation to an impugned decision of a body such as the corporation was not whether on the facts known to the court there was a real danger of bias in one or more members of the decision-making body, but whether the decision-making body as a whole could be shown to have gone beyond mere predisposition in favour of a particular course and to have predetermined it.

In his Lordship's view, the need to make a distinction between judicial or quasi-judicial decisions had gone with the decision in *R v Gough* because in that case the House of Lords assimilated the test of appearance of bias to the unitary test of a real danger of bias, in part by assimilating the hypothetical observer to the court hearing the challenge and correspondingly by assimilating the maxim that justice had to be seen to be done to the court's duty to identify any real danger of unjust bias.

That being so, there was, in his Lordship's judgment, nothing in the jurisprudence of *R v Gough* which necessarily limited to judicial or quasi-judicial tribunals the rule against participation of a person with a personal interest in the outcome.

The line of authority relied upon by the second respondent represented a different, although equally important, principle: that the decision of a body could be struck down if its outcome had been predetermined whether by the adoption of an inflexible policy

or by the effective surrender of the body's independent judgment. The decision of the House of Lords in *Franklin v Minister of Town and Country Planning* (1948) AC 87 could not be regarded as diluting that principle.

There were also sound grounds of principle in modern public law for declining to limit the principle in *R v Gough* because in the modern state the interests of individuals or of the public might be more radically affected by administrative decisions than by the decisions of courts and judicial tribunals.

His Lordship next considered how the principle would apply to a body exercising town and country planning powers. So far as concerned apparent bias there could be little if any difference between an elected and an appointed planning authority.

In both cases there was a constant risk that the body would have to decide matters in which a member happened to have a pecuniary or personal interest. In such cases the secretary of state's successive codes for urban development corporations and for local government recognised that unless it was too remote or insignificant to matter the interest had to be declared and the member concerned could not participate in the decision.

The test of bias in the *Gough* case would be uniformly applied: what would differ from case to case was the significance of the interest and its degree of proximity or remoteness to the issue to be decided and whether, if it was not so insignificant or remote as to be discounted, the disqualified member had violated his disqualification by participating in the decision.

On authority, a direct pecuniary or proprietary interest, however small, was conclusively presumed to create a real danger of bias. What should a member of a body do or refrain from doing when a conflict of interest arose?

The applicants had submitted that where a body was taking a decision in which all those interested were not before it and able to waive the objection, any member who had an interest requiring to be declared had not only to refrain from voting on the issue but had to abstain himself from the meeting while the issue was discussed.

His Lordship accepted the respondent's submission that there was no such rule but said that there was a long way from concluding that a member with an interest to declare had no need to do more than refrain from voting.

The applicable principle was not a matter of form but of substance. It was that an individual with a personal, pecuniary or proprietary interest in the subject matter of the decision was disqualified from

participating in it. Participation could be more than voting or discussion. It was possible that the mere declaration of a disqualifying interest followed by abstention on discussion or voting would not be enough to negate participation in the decision.

Accordingly while withdrawal was not a universal requirement of law when a conflict arose, it was undoubtedly wise and in his Lordship's judgment there was no distinction to be made between those meetings held in private and those in public.

His Lordship considered the alleged personal interests of the chairman and members of the corporation. On the evidence, although involvement with a Conservative association constituted neither a pecuniary nor a personal interest capable of conflicting with his duties, the fact that the chairman's land manifestly stood to multiply in value if planning consent were given for retail development of the rugby club land, was obviously pecuniary.

There was a clear linkage between the chairman's interest and the fact that they were prospects and realities. However, the first decision attacked was in July 1994 by which time the rugby club's proposal to move to Shadwell was dead and buried and with it the chairman's pecuniary interest in the grant of planning permission for the club's existing land.

The submission by the applicants that the decisions eventually taken were so contaminated by the undeclared interest of the chairman in the previous decisions that they could not stand failed.

If his Lordship were persuaded that the decision of July 1994 was a product of a prior tainted decision, real danger of bias would have been established.

Although his Lordship had rejected the second respondent's submission that bias could not affect more decisions than those it tainted directly, the valley scheme which was eventually adopted was a fresh proposal to which the corporation gave independent consideration.

Vice-presidency of the rugby club was only an honorific designation carrying no active or executive function and membership merely an association falling short of identification with a party interested in the material planning applications. Membership was not a source of personal loyalty capable of creating a bias "from kindred or other cause": see *R v Rand* (1866) LR 1 QB 230, in the circumstances therefore the application for judicial review failed.

Solicitors: Brooke North Goodwin, Leeds; Treasury Solicitor; Gordons Wright & Wright, Bradford.

Woolwich Building Society v Dickman and Another
Before Lord Justice Butler-Sloss, Lord Justice Waite and Lord Justice Morritt
[Judgment February 15]

A building society which had failed to realise that the occupiers of the mortgaged property, a dwelling house on registered land, were protected tenants and had therefore required them to sign written consents to the effect that their rights of occupancy were subordinated to the rights and powers of the lender, without registering the consents as an overriding interest, was not entitled to a possession order.

The Court of Appeal so held in dismissing an appeal by the lender, Woolwich Building Society, against a refusal by Judge Butler, QC, in Central London County Court to make a possession order against the second defendants, Harold and Fay Todd, the tenants of a property mortgaged by the first defendant, Robert Anthony Dickman.

Section 98 of the Rent Act 1977 provides: "(1) ... a court shall not make an order for possession of a dwelling-house which is for the time being let on a protected tenancy ... unless the court considers it reasonable to make such an order ..."

Section 152 provides: "(1) ... 'landlord' includes any person from time to time deriving title under the original landlord and ... any person other than the tenant who is ... entitled to possession of the dwelling-

house ..."

Mr Gordon Nurse for the appellants; Ms Marilyn Kennedy McGregor for the tenants: the first defendant did not appear and was not represented.

LORD JUSTICE WAITE said that although it was not the society's policy to lend on the security of tenanted property this particular loan received approval. The result of the oversight was that the case became treated mistakenly by the society as one which fell into the familiar category where the borrower shared rights of occupancy with members of his family who might in certain circumstances be able to assert a beneficial interest in the mortgaged property carrying rights of occupancy binding on a lender with notice of their occupation.

The society made it a requirement of the mortgage advance that the occupiers should sign written consents to their rights of occupancy being subordinated to the rights and powers of the lender. When the mortgagor defaulted in payment under the mortgage and did not defend the possession proceedings, the occupying tenants resisted any possession order against themselves on the ground that their tenancy was binding on the society.

The consents had been carefully drawn and clearly relied on by the society as an essential precondition to the grant of the mortgage. Once they were given effect they could not sensibly be read as anything other than an express agreement that the Todd's rights of

occupation of the flat, whenever and however derived, were to be subjected to the possessory rights of the society.

It was inescapable that the society derived its right to claim possession of the flat from the mortgage, including the demise from Mr Dickman which it notionally incorporated. The society did not, therefore, enjoy the advantage that was available to the lenders in *Dudley and District Benefit Building Society v Emerson* (1949) Ch 707 of being able to deny any contractual right in the Todd's which bound them or any interest in the Todd's which affected their title.

In addition, however effective the consents might otherwise have been to override the rights of the Todd's as persons in actual occupation of the flat, they could have no effect upon the mandatory rights they enjoyed under section 70(1)(b) unless a provision to that effect was expressed on the register. No such provision was there expressed.

LORD JUSTICE MORRITT, concurring, said that there could be no doubt that, subject only to the consent letters, section 98(1) would apply. The building society would undoubtedly derive title under the original landlord, Mr Dickman, so as to fall within the definition of landlord contained in section 152(1).

At all material times before completion of the mortgage, the Todd's were tenants of Mr Dickman. On completion they did not surrender their tenancy, they did not charge it to the building

society as further security for the loan and they did not vacate the flat.

From commencement of the mortgage until the instant proceedings began the Todd's remained in occupation of the flat with the knowledge and consent of the building society.

The case was not concerned with how an estoppel of the nature for which the society contended worked in relation to unregistered land so as to alter the priorities between the tenants and the mortgage.

The case concerned registered land and overriding interests within section 70(1) of the Land Registration Act 1925. Nothing was expressed on the register in relation to the letters of consent so as to exclude the deemed effect of that section.

The Todd's tenancy remained an overriding interest notwithstanding the letters of consent. Thus the charge to the building society took effect subject to it.

It followed that the relationship of landlord and tenant, which the society and the Todd's, which would clearly have arisen in the absence of those letters, came into existence on commencement of the mortgage despite them.

Therefore the claim of the society to possession of the flat fell within section 98(1) of the Rent Act 1977 and no amount of estoppel could take it out.

Lord Justice Butler-Sloss agreed. Solicitors: Sharnham & Trethewey, Bedford; Matthew Arnold & Baldwin, Wazford.

Settlement offer not same as payment in

Singh v Parkfield Group plc
Before Lord Justice Stuart-Smith, Lord Justice Ward and Mr Justice Buckley
[Judgment March 14]

An offer to settle an action "without prejudice" (*Calderbank v Calderbank* (1976) Fam 53) was not the same as a payment into court vis-à-vis costs and accordingly where a plaintiff failed to beat the offer made in the letter, he was nevertheless entitled to his costs from the defendant.

The Court of Appeal so held in dismissing an appeal brought by the defendants, Parkfield Group plc, against the decision of Judge Horden, QC, who, sitting as a deputy judge of the Queen's Bench Division on May 18, 1994, awarded the plaintiff, Moinjer Singh, £64,289 damages for personal injury plus costs.

A fortnight before the trial the defendants had made a *Calderbank* offer of £65,000 which had been refused by the plaintiff.

Mr Julian Matthews for the

defendants; Mr Robert Glancy for the plaintiff.

LORD JUSTICE STUART-SMITH said that there had been no reference in the *Calderbank* letter to the payment of costs. Mr Matthews submitted that everyone took the offer to include costs up to the date of acceptance.

However, his Lordship wished to point out that *Calderbank* letters should include all the details of the offer being made.

Mr Matthews submitted that the purpose of a *Calderbank* offer was laid out in *Cuts v Head* (1984) Ch 200. He did not contend that the defendants should have their costs of the action after the offer, but that some account should have been taken of it.

Following the decision of *Cuts v Head*, the Rules of the Supreme Court were altered. Order 22, rule 14 introduced a provision that the court should not take into account an offer made "without prejudice to costs", where the party who made the offer could have pro-

ceeded his position by means of a payment into court.

However, by amendment pursuant to rule 19 of the Rules of the Supreme Court (Amendment No 2) Regulations (SI 1990 No 1689), the express proviso to Order 22, rule 14 was removed, although no amendment was made to Order 62, rule 9(1)(d).

That provided that any written offer made under Order 22, rule 14, should not be taken into account if the party who made the offer could have protected his position by means of a payment into court.

Mr Matthews submitted that the deletion of the proviso must have been intended to have the effect of allowing the court to take a *Calderbank* offer into account. His Lordship did not accept that.

There was no dispute in the present case that the defendants could have made a payment into court. Moreover a late payment in, that is, less than 21 days before trial, could still be taken into account: see *King v Weston-Howell* (1989) 1 WLR 579. That was obviously subject to modification if

the payment was made so late that the plaintiff did not have reasonable time to consider it.

It was only where a plaintiff who refused an offer of settlement but failed to beat the payment in, that the defendant was protected as to his costs. Otherwise, pursuant to Order 62, rule 5(4) a plaintiff who accepted an offer was entitled to his costs up to the time of his acceptance.

In the ordinary way where a defendant was facing a monetary claim, he should make a payment into court in sufficient time for the plaintiff to consider it.

The policy of the law should be to settle cases wherever possible. There might be advantages if the court had a wider discretion in this area, although there were equal advantages in certainty in the system. It was not a matter for the courts to change. The appeal would be dismissed.

Lord Justice Ward and Mr Justice Buckley agreed. Solicitors: Vizards; Bryn Thompson & Partners.

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SMALLWORLD

The media portrays scientists as playing God and creating monsters, but it is time they fought back about their achievements

Let's say goodbye to Frankenstein

Where can I sign a petition for the abolition of "weeks"? Likewise "days" and "years". The tag is a signal of utter dreariness to come — a ubiquitous public relations blast on behalf of something unexceptionable like the Mushroom or the Child, already smothered in worthiness. To put it another way, National Science Week is a bore.

Or was. This year the three-year-old enterprise has a new, even more righteous name. Officially, it has been upgraded to the Science, Engineering and Technology Festival, or SET 96, as befits the shift of its sponsor, the Office of Science and Technology, from the Cabinet Office to the Department of Trade and Industry. Under this new management each day has its own theme: Monday was "Technology Foresight Day". See what I mean? SET 96 is a massive exercise in preaching to the converted. Among these I count myself, thanks to a year-long geology

course at Harvard that was, for English Literature students, a stimulating and scenic way to fulfil the university's science requirement, and in my case, to find a husband.

Unsurprisingly, this year's science orgy has attracted enthusiasts from the research councils, academe and the BBC. The Beeb's efforts have been extensive, including a double dose of Einstein on *Horizon* and, on Radio 2, a full hour on Time and the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

The message that "science is interesting, exciting and accessible" is hitting home, claims the BBC's in-house magazine, *Ariel*. Not from where I sit. British students still lurk near the bottom of the European numeracy tables and the public misunderstanding of science has never been greater.

National Science Week has had the misfortune to fall in the same month that sheep-cloning and animal-to-human organ transplants have drawn accolades such as "Monster or miracle?" (*Daily Mail*) and "Monster out of control" (*The Sunday Telegraph*).

You had to read deep into the stories to see the benefits to human life, limb and mind that these advances will bring. The nightmare vision outweighed the good news by about ten to one. "Scientists" as a group came across as creators of a "neo-Frankenstein world" (*The Daily Record*).

Indeed, so savagely had the *Daily Mail* attacked scientists for the cloned sheep that, several days later, when it wanted to splash on its front page the discovery of a way to grow new brain tissue, it avoided the dirty word "scientist"



BRENDA MADDOX

altogether. "Doctors" were given the credit for "Hope of a cure for 'Superman' injuries". Playing God was not mentioned.

There is a moral here for the Committee for the Public Understanding of Science (Copus) and other science well-wishers. Forget all that mealy-mouthed PR. Attack. Complain to the Press Com-

plaints Commission about the misrepresentation of genetic advances. Complain to the Commission for Racial Equality about the class label of "scientists" as an alien breed whose only regret is that Hitler is not alive to be cloned. Take out advertisements to point out that if cloning human beings were to be attempted, against all existing law, it would have to be done at the embryo stage. By the time any Saddam decides that he should become the model for a master race, it is too late.

Copus must also train its experts in not being their own worst enemies. On Radio 4's *Start the Week* last week, when Melvyn Bragg asked the distinguished biologist, Professor John Maynard Smith, about widespread fears over the misuse of genetics, he replied that the question was

"boring". What the professor meant was that the danger was so remote as to be meaningless. But he chose the wrong word and sounded arrogant.

The geneticist Richard Dawkins, the first Oxford professor of the public understanding of science, is one who dares to attack the anti-science lobby. He describes science as the one form of intellectual endeavour which achieves progress. Bring back Galileo or Newton. Professor Dawkins says, and any third-rate student of today could give them lessons in what has been discovered since their time. But bring back Shakespeare and writers today could teach him nothing.

Another master presenter of the case for science is Professor Lewis Wolpert, a developmental biologist from University College Medical

School and the chairman of Copus. Angry about the current reporting of genetics and embryology, he has found the right phrase. Trifling stories that play upon people's anxieties and purvey such research as inherently horrific is, he says, "genetic pornography".

NEVER MIND the V-chip. What about a G-chip? Grief is my candidate for the new pornography. Filming the faces of people getting the worst news that anyone can imagine is, to me, far more prurient than showing the broken bodies of those past suffering.

Something odd is happening in British life: a sentimentalisation of death. Of course those tragically killed should be remembered, but not with mounds of plastic-wrapped bouquets and rain-soaked teddy bears. If television bears any responsibility for the new over-dramatisation of grief, it is for these tawdry visual aids.

Sharing Dunblane's grief

Magnus Linklater on how the world press reported the tragedy

For three days in Dunblane last week I was part of the media pack, participant as well as observer in a story which was as emotionally charged as any I have ever witnessed. None of us, I think, came away from that place unchanged. But it has been the behaviour of the press in reporting the tragedy and the sheer number of those descending on a small town in shock that has become a matter of controversy.

There has been no lack of criticism, mostly from a distance. One columnist described the press as like sharks in a feeding frenzy, a particularly offensive image for those who were there, grappling with a story which affected journalists almost as much as the people themselves.

My own view is that with very few exceptions the British press and television behaved throughout with tact and professionalism: that, in those few days, they were a vital source of information for the people of Dunblane; and that the huge interest from abroad was as much an expression of international support and sympathy as an over-intrusion. CBC in Canada gave over the whole of its *National Magazine* show to Dunblane, "because of the strong historical ties with Scotland", according to its London bureau chief.

But there was a price to pay. Towards the end of the week, tolerance was wearing thin. When Pat Greenhill, the provost of Stirling, whose home is in Dunblane, was telephoned at 2am by an American TV presenter demanding a prime time interview, she felt that she had had enough. "From then on I simply wanted them to go away." And on Sunday, they did just that. In what must be an unprecedented decision, the media, led by the BBC, simply withdrew.

It is very hard for an outsider to comprehend the dynamics of covering a disaster on this scale. To begin

with, there is simply no source of information. Police, confronting the horror of the massacre, had to deal with traumatised parents and teachers rather than hand out details to the press. The local authorities were stretched to breaking point. And families, desperate to discover whether their own children had been involved, knew nothing of what was happening. In those circumstances, the press acts as a distiller of news, and on this occasion they did so at great speed. I first heard the name of the gunman, Thomas Hamilton, at lunchtime. By the end of that first afternoon, most of the salient facts had been assembled.

Time and again during those first agonising hours outside the school I saw parents who were being interviewed coming away, relieved to have garnered even a shred of news. Local journalists, some of whom had children at the school, were first on the scene. Those, like Kate Fawcett and Alan Mackay of BBC Scotland, who live in the town, managed to convey something of the emotional impact of the shootings as well as reporting the news. Later, a makeshift press centre was established and a solidly professional press spokesman from Strathclyde Police was drafted in to handle the growing band of press and TV crews.

By the end of Day Two there were, by my calculation, between 300 and 400 media representatives (including back-up teams) in a town of 9,000 inhabitants. The *Sun* had 27 reporters and photographers, the *Mail* about as many. The paraphernalia of modern communications — TV lorries, satellite dishes, arclights and antennae — banked the streets.

Reporters were in search of reaction as well as news. Almost everyone delivering flowers to the school or visiting the cathedral was stopped for



Between 300 and 400 media representatives poured into a town of 9,000 inhabitants

an interview. Most were prepared to stop, to try to convey their feelings, and to repeat what they had said for the umpteenth time. I saw very few signs of resentment. Perhaps people needed to talk.

Most reporting effort went into digging up detail about Thomas Hamilton and his background. Everyone who had ever had dealings with him was located and interviewed. One tabloid found his telephone bill and dispatched reporters to trace everyone he had called. Others found parents who had raised doubts about his activities. The BBC discovered that the Scottish Secretary, Michael Forsyth, had corresponded with him.

How the press dealt with bereaved families was more sensitive. Early on, the Chief Constable of Central Region

pleaded with reporters not to approach the parents of children who had died. That was respected on the first day. On Day Two, the *Daily Mirror* located and interviewed two parents, apparently with their approval. The *Daily Express* then talked to Willie Turner, whose daughter Megan had died. Mr Turner, approached outside his house, invited the *Express* reporter inside. The article that resulted was one of the most affecting interviews of the week. I don't think I could possibly justify what they did. I cannot deny that the outcome was a moving piece of journalism.

Despite the precedent these interviews set, *The Sun* decided not to do the same. "We listened to what the police had said about the bereaved families, and respected that," said

the paper's Scottish editor, Bob Bird. "Scotland is really a big village and everyone involved felt directly affected. Most of our people are in a bad way having lived with the story from its outset."

Most of the rumours of press excesses proved untrue. A persistent suggestion that one photographer had attempted to get into the mortuary was without foundation. As late as Sunday, long after the media were judged to have overstayed their welcome, *The Times*'s Steve Farrell, hovering on the outskirts of a crowd around the wreath laid by the Queen, found himself helped by two women. "Let him through," they said. "Let the press see what the Queen said to us."

Alexandra Frean forecasts a bitter battle for survival

Weather channels blow into Britain

A gust of competition is about to hit the troubled waters of UK cable television with the launch of two rival channels dedicated to that great British obsession: the weather.

Sweeping in from across the Atlantic, the US-owned Weather Channel and the Canadian-backed Weather Network are promising a diet of local, regional, national and international forecasts, lots of high-tech gadgetry and graphics, pollen counts, ultraviolet and ozone warnings, sports forecasts, road conditions and traffic news. They also plan features on meteorology and the earth sciences.

The appetite of British viewers for a dedicated television weather channel is untested, but the rival broadcasters can bank on two things: the British love weather celebrities — Michael Fish and John Ketley have assumed cult status — and the UK faces one of the most unpredictable and changeable climates in the world, which demands up-to-date, accurate forecasts.

Michael Eckert, chief executive of the Atlanta-based Weather Channel, says that the channel's success in America, where it has been running for 14 years and is available in a potential 63 million households, is based on its responsiveness to consumer demand.

"In the US we launched the Fall Foliage Report, which gives reports on where the brilliance of the autumnal foliage is at its peak. In direct response to requests from viewers," he says.

The company's pre-launch research in the UK has identified a particular interest in bi-meteorology, which examines how the changes in weather systems affect people's health and their moods.

The Weather Channel, which is owned by the US media group Landmark Communications, has linked up with the Met Office for the collection of data. Local forecasts, using graphics, animated radar pictures, satellite photographs and tabulated data, will be broadcast every five minutes. In between, there

will be programmes aimed at various consumer groups — housewives, business travellers, professionals (such as pilots and airport ground staff), outdoor workers (particularly in the construction industry), weekend athletes, sports fans, and people interested in the scientific explanations behind the weather.

Both the Weather Channel and the Weather Network are hoping to launch by June, ahead of the summer holidays and Wimbledon.

The Weather Network is backed by the Canadian media company Pelmorex and by the Weather Department, a Birmingham-based weather forecasting group that provides the weather for six regional ITV stations.

Rob Golding, managing director of the network, says that the service will be an essential component in the basic package of services that cable

operators offer. "Viewing of other channels peaks in the evening. The prime time for a weather service is in the morning, with a second peak in the early evening," he says.

The Weather Network will also offer local forecasts every five minutes, using local insertion technology. The network is not promising high-profile celebrity presenters. "We want to break the mould and introduce a fresh approach based on high resolution graphics," Mr Golding says.

Advertising and sponsorship will boost the subscription revenues from cable operators for both channels. They claim interest from a host of weather-related advertisers, from holiday companies to porridge oats manufacturers.

The average viewing time for such channels in North America is about eight minutes, but viewers tune in three to four times a day.

Both channels claim that they will radically improve the accuracy of weather forecasts in the UK. There is little doubt, however, that the UK's fragmented cable system can only support one 24-hour weather television service. The battle of the stations will be a fight to the death.



Viewers will get local weather updates and features

Michael Jackson defends the BBC's eclecticism and denies it has lost its touch for agenda-setting

Television for today

We are often told that the BBC has seriously lost its touch. That it's no longer a rallying-point for the nation. I want to explore these claims by looking at some programmes — those annoying rivalries often ignored by pundits fond of sweeping statements about a broadcasting paradise lost.

The most momentous event that I've lived through has been the collapse of the Berlin Wall. Its repercussions have been vast and dizzying. For me, these events have been the acid test of our broadcasting in the past six years — the test of its range, and its depth.

Fall of the Wall, *Tales From Prague*, *Russian Wonderland*, *The Second Russian Revolution*, the nightly *Sarajevo: A Street Under Siege*, *Messengers From Moscow*, *Siege Doctors*, *The Death of Yugoslavia* — these have been just some of the BBC2 series and seasons that have grappled with the new world order, or disorder, since November 1989. News and current affairs, documentaries, science, music and arts — all have pitched in.

On BBC1 there has been Alexander Solzhenitsyn in *The Homecoming*, On Channel 4 — *Soviet Spring*, *And the Walls Came Tumbling Down*, *Bloody Bosnia*, and Clive Gordon's remarkable work on Chechnya and the former Yugoslavia. On ITV — *Ceausescu's Children*, and films by Yury Podrelyks.

Did television 20 years ago have this kind of appetite for ideas, repertoire and understanding, faced with big world events?

Well, perhaps the biggest world event of the early Seventies was the Vietnam War. And television in those days was surprisingly shy of addressing the cataclysm in South-East Asia, outside regular news and current affairs. From 1970 to 1975, I could find

no series or seasons about Vietnam listed in the BBC archive. Beyond normal news output, there were just ten other individual programmes that reflected the war in some way — across both channels, during the last five years of the conflict.

I'm not trying to rubbish television from the past, but it's important to put it in its proper perspective.

The shockwaves from Berlin broadcast a challenge to orthodoxies everywhere. In the 1990s, no established way of doing things was going to be quite the same again. This gave rise to two phenomena. One was a great mood of uncertainty. The other... was a vigorous new curiosity abroad in the world, a freeing of the imagination. People perceived a wealth of new possibilities.

One reason why television is sharper today is because it has been forced to take stock of this new landscape... As any sociology professor, or taxi driver, will tell you, we're living now in a "decentred" world. There's less of a leading role for the tastes of the educated middle classes, as society breaks up into self-reliant groups with their own tastes, voices and interests.

In this new world of ideas and attitudes, there can be no easy successors to the Grand Lamas of television's past — the René Cuthberts and Kenneth Clarks. No single presenter can be a high priest of a particular area of factual output any more — though there'll always be a place for well-expressed expertise.

Television today is less hectoring and less assuming. It's more open-minded in a way that might sometimes... seem evasive or bland but,

in fact, is more genuinely inquisitive.

Even before 1989, the attitudes and energy levels of television had been transformed — and the cause was Channel 4. Channel 4 changed everything about television. It didn't speak to you with... that patrician voice that seemed to typify so much of television before. There were all sorts of new voices — some strange, some terrifying, some compelling, some unbelievably awful. And Channel 4 didn't fear the contemporary.

The job of the channel controller is both to serve the audience in its separate constituencies, and to bring viewers together for more collective pleasures. It's a tricky balancing act — one that we don't always get right, and one that everyone in television needs to share.

Research has led to the idea of zoning — providing easily recognised places in the schedule for different parts of the audience. And it's encouraged BBC2 to reach... to wards women and younger people, via programmes like *Modern Times*, a revamped afternoon schedule, and comedy series like *Mrs Merton* and *Shooting Stars*.

Television's ability to surprise must always remain its most redeeming feature... So serendipity goes hand-in-hand with strategy. We knew that *The House* would deliver a fascinating insiders' account of a major cultural institution. But it found a much broader audience than we expected... Viewers responded to its portrait of fear and loathing in the British workplace.

And *Our Friends in the North* also



Viewers drew their own message from *Our Friends in the North*

hit unpredictable nerves. We saw it as a political epic — drama as social history. But the audience saw it as a more personal story — about the dilemmas of staying true to yourself as you grow older, and true to the people you grow old with.

Viewers don't want closed agendas arrogantly handed down. They want to find their own ways through the issues, and mine their own solutions.

It is for these reasons that the open-ended storylines on *EastEnders* are some of the richest on television. Not long ago, a newspaper ran a story about how parents cope with learning their children are HIV-positive. An elderly couple talked of the day their daughter gave them the news. Could they comprehend it? "Yes. We'd seen a story like it on *EastEnders*. It helped us understand." That is what television is about — a two-way relationship with an alert, active audience.

Television today is better at expressing the promiscuity of ideas around us. It's no longer frightened that the world is complicated. I'm not saying that programme-makers are somehow better than their forebears. Just that we've learnt to listen to our audience harder.

Yes, society is more diverse. And, yes, the BBC can no longer be a drill-sergeant of taste. But precisely because of the new complexity of the world, the BBC is more and more vital as a meeting place, a democratic forum, a confirmer of citizenship.

If you stick to principles of quality broadcasting, the audience will follow you by their own free choice. Few believed the BBC could survive multichannel, deregulated, commercial broadcasting. But we are.

● The author is Controller of BBC2. This is an extract of his speech to the Royal Television Society last week.

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Woody Allen blows it as a jazz clarinetist



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How the recession is affecting the French market



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Raging Bull reveals his true colours

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THE TIMES

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

WEDNESDAY MARCH 20 1996

Names court win could be worth £200m

By SARAH BAGNALL

MORE THAN 1,000 Lloyd's names, including Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, won a High Court victory yesterday that should secure damages of up to £200 million.

The names were suing 42 members' agents and the Rose Thomson Young managing agency for negligence in a bid to recover insurance losses of £450 million, an average of £450,000 for each name.

Mr Lang is thought to have lost £800,000. Other Tory MPs involved in the action are Sir Richard Body and David Tredinnick.

Ian Chalk, chairman of the Rose Thomson Young Action Group, said: "It is a notable victory and reinforces our contention that the amount of money being offered to names should be substantially increased from the current level of £450,000 to £2.8 billion, part of which is an out-of-court settlement."

Mr Justice Morison ruled that the 1,092 litigating names on Syndicate 255 should receive compensation that would reduce their losses to a

level suffered if their affairs had been handled competently. He said that Norman Bullen, the syndicate's underwriter, did "his incompetent best but fell well below the standards to be expected of any underwriter who specialised in this market". A competent underwriter would not have exposed names to a loss exceeding 40 per cent of their underwriting limit.

The judge went on: "If he [Mr Bullen] had been respon-

sibly managed I have little doubt that he would have acted more competently. Names may legitimately ask themselves whether the managing agents did anything to justify their percentage."

The losses incurred by the 1,092 litigating names are the result of a string of catastrophes, starting with the explosion on the Piper Alpha oil platform in 1988, followed by Hurricane Hugo and the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Mr Lang's presence as a litigant is significant as the Department of Trade and Industry is in charge of regulating Lloyd's. It is in the process of determining whether to grant approval for Equitas, the new reinsurance company being set up by Lloyd's, and a vital component in the insurance market's bid for survival.

Mr Lang has handed responsibility for this to Anthony Nelson, his junior minister.

Equitas has appointed Professor Tim Congdon, a Lloyd's name and one of the Chancellor's "wise men", and Michael Hart as advisers to its investment committee.

The losses from these disasters were concentrated on a relatively small percentage of the Lloyd's membership because of the LMX spiral. This involved an incestuous web of reinsurance contracts between a select number of syndicates. The end result was that the syndicates were reinsuring their own risks rather than passing them on.

Mr Chalk said: "I am particularly pleased with the outcome bearing in mind that a former chairman of Lloyd's said publicly that 'the whingeing names were happy to accept the profits in the good years but are not happy to pay legitimate claims in the bad years'. This judgment has vindicated our claim that the claims were not legitimate."

Mr Chalk said that the likely court award would be "substantially" more than the £2.8 billion settlement package. Their share of the £800 million litigation fund only compensates them for 27 per cent of their losses. The action group is to seek an interim award.

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Peter Kindersley said profits in the CD-Rom division rose by 134 per cent to £9.8 million

Dorling CD-Rom business booms

DORLING KINDERSLEY, the publisher of illustrated reference books for adults and children, said that its CD-Rom business has become the fastest-growing part of the company, with 13 titles published since late 1994 including Eyewitness Encyclopedia of Na-

ture (Eric Reguly writes). The company reported pre-tax profits of £8.1 million, up 54 per cent, on turnover of £80.5 million, up 32 per cent, in the half year to December. An interim dividend of 1.5p, against 1.3p, is to be paid on May 24. Turnover in the

multimedia division, which publishes the CD-Roms, rose 134 per cent to £9.8 million, equivalent to 12 per cent of total turnover.

Peter Kindersley, chairman, said the CD-Rom division planned to launch up to eight new titles this year.

Flotation bonanza hope for Allied

By SARAH BAGNALL

MORE THAN 500 staff at Allied Carpets, Britain's largest carpet retailer, are set to share in a £40 million bonanza when the company seeks a stock-market listing later this year.

According to a source close to the company, Allied is planning a flotation this year, in a move that is likely to value the company at more than £200 million.

More than 500 employees — from senior management to sales staff — own 20 per cent of the carpet retailer's equity, while Asda, the supermarket group, and CINven, the venture capitalist, each hold 40 per cent.

The 200-strong chain was formed three years ago when Asda merged Allied Carpets, its loss-making subsidiary, with Carpetland Carpet Centres. At the time, Carpetland was majority owned by CINven, which had provided the finance for a management buyout from Lowndes Queensway, the collapsed retailer, in 1991.

Asda retained a 40 per cent stake in the merged group and has the option to lift its holding to up to 50 per cent depending on the timing of flotation and the group's performance. Allied made a pre-tax profit of more than £12 million on sales of £200 million in the year to June 31, 1995.

Of the 20 per cent equity stake held by management and staff, the lion's share is in the hands of the senior management team, which is led by Ray Nethercott, managing director. However, more than 500 of the group's 1,900 employees own shares or hold share options.

Asda originally had tried to float or sell its Allied Carpets offshoot in 1987 but the stock market crash in October forced the group to abandon plans as the falling shares prompted potential bidders to cut their bids to as low as £80 million.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKETS

FT-SE 100	3893.0	(+23.4)
Yield	4.01%	
FT-SE All share	1835.38	(+11.58)
Nikkei	20442.60	(+157.47)
New York		
Dow Jones	5891.55	(+7.95)*
S&P Composite	653.71	(+1.06)*

FEDERAL FUNDS

Federal Funds	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
Long Bond	9 1/4%	(9 1/4%)
Yield	6.89%	(6.71%)

3-MTH INTERBANK

3-mth Interbank	6 1/4%	(6 1/4%)
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LIFE LONG GILT

Life long gilt	104 1/2%	(105 1/2%)
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NEW YORK

New York	1.5328*	(1.5324)
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LONDON

London	1.5328	(1.5291)
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DM

DM	2.2838	(2.2574)
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FF

FF	7.7275	(7.7260)
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SP

SP	1.8262	(1.8216)
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YEN

Yen	162.84	(162.11)
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£ INDEX

£ Index	83.7	(83.6)
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TOKYO CLOSE YEN 106.10

BRENT 15-DAY (JUN)

Brent 15-day (Jun)	\$17.85	(\$18.00)
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GOLD

London close	\$386.55	(\$394.95)
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* denotes midday trading price

Cash move

A Central Criminal Court jury heard how the sum of £400,000 was transferred from Polly Peck International to an account in Switzerland, turned into cash, and sent back to London, all in the space of two days, and at considerable expense. Page 26

Optimistic

Reexam, the beleaguered paper and packaging group, sought to counter the impact of a 25 per cent decline in profits in 1995 with an optimistic statement on this year's prospects. Page 27, Tempus 28



Ian Lang, who was among the 1,092 successful litigants

SE debates more commercial role

By PATRICIA TEHAN

THE board of the Stock Exchange is considering proposals for living off unprofitable activities and focusing on turning itself into a commercial institution.

Directors discussed the future strategy and likely future roles of the Exchange at an awayday on Monday, when they examined options put forward by external consultants with whom they have been working.

Headed by John Kemp-Welch, the chairman, they were asked to focus on two key issues: the fundamental question of what the role of the Exchange should be in the future, and whether it can achieve its objectives at an acceptable cost.

The meeting follows the dismissal in January of Michael Lawrence, the chief executive, after he lost the confidence of the board. His dismissal prompted massive public debate over the future role of the Exchange.

At the Monday meeting, the directors examined the Exchange's statutory role in relation to the listing of company shares. It seems likely that the Exchange will attempt to separate this role and develop its

own rules that would mark it out as a commercial operation in competition with other exchanges around the world and with organisations such as Tradepoint in the UK.

The Exchange loses its settlement role with the introduction of automated settlement under Crest in the summer. After this week's meeting it now seems likely that the Exchange will also give up its unprofitable role of post-trade management, which would mean some job losses.

Tomorrow, the board is expected to approve proposals for the introduction of a fully automated, order-matching trading system. A progress report recommends replacing the current quote-driven system with an order-matching system for all shares, while retaining a so-called "upstairs" quote-driven system for trading unusually large blocks of shares.

Today, Mr Kemp-Welch, Ian Plenderleith, non-executive deputy chairman, and Donald Brydon, a non-executive director, appear before the Commons Treasury Select Committee and are expected to face tough questioning over Mr Lawrence's dismissal.

C&G leads loan war with 6.95%

By ANNE ASHWORTH

CHELTHAM & Gloucester has cut its mortgage rate to 6.95 per cent, the lowest so far by a major lender in the current mortgage war.

The new rate takes effect tomorrow for new borrowers, and from June 1 for existing borrowers.

After the base rate cut earlier this month, the Halifax Building Society is charging 7.24 per cent, and Abbey National, 7.19 per cent to 7.29 per cent, depending on loan size. The Nationwide Building Society, which cut its mortgage rate to 6.99 per cent before the base rate change, to show commitment to mutuality, has not yet decided whether to make another cut.

Among other lenders, the lowest rate (£9.99 per cent) is from Bradford & Bingley Direct, part of the Bradford & Bingley Building Society. Early last year, C&G, now owned by Lloyds Bank, pledged that its rate would be 0.25 per cent below the five major lenders' average.

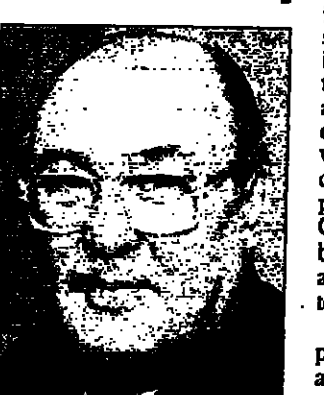
Andrew Longhurst, C&G chief executive, said: "The C&G's move puts paid to the argument that the most competitive rate can be offered only by building societies."

Lucas maintains growth strategy

By ROSS TIEMAN, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE search for bolt-on acquisitions and a global partner in automotive components will continue at Lucas Industries despite the departure of George Simpson, chief executive, this autumn to head the General Electric Company.

Although Mr Simpson yesterday pledged to present Lucas's full-year figures in October, Sir Brian Pearce, the chairman, acknowledged the urgency of the search for a replacement. It took nine months to recruit Mr Simpson from British Aerospace two years ago, he said. This time "we haven't got that long". First fruits of the restructuring



Pearce: stressing urgency

and redirection emerged yesterday. In the six months to January 31, pre-tax profits climbed 38 per cent to £61.6 million. Overall sales rose 9 per cent to £1.4 billion. But borrowings rocketed to £413 million, pushing gearing to 56 per cent. The cause: destocking by carmakers and rising investment in new plants and products.

John Grant, finance director, said gearing would fall to "the mid-30s in percentage terms" by the year end as production got back in step with demand. Mr Simpson said that left Lucas ample scope for bolt-on acquisitions in automotive parts and aerospace. But the strategic vision is a merger or partnership that would create a £10 billion a year business in the top ten of car-company suppliers worldwide. Buying the 28 per cent stake in Valeo, the French parts company, on offer from Carlo de Benedetti, the Italian businessman, has been put aside because the holding is too small to give control.

The dividend stays at 2.1p, payable on July 1 with a scrip alternative.

Tempus, page 28

Leeson's bosses may face disqualification

By ROBERT MILLER

FORMER senior executives of Barings face disqualification as company directors if administrators find evidence that they failed to exercise proper controls over Nick Leeson.

Ernst & Young, the Barings administrator, is empowered under the Companies Act to recommend to the Department for Trade and Industry that it starts disqualification proceedings against any director who failed to discharge his duties.

The Securities and Futures Authority yesterday responded to criticisms that it failed to take decisive action against Peter Baring, the former chairman, and Andrew Tuckey, his deputy. Last Friday, the SFA said Mr Baring had agreed not to return to the City. Mr Tuckey, now a corporate finance adviser to ING Barings, agreed to play a restricted role in the

securities industry. Richard Farrant, the SFA's chief executive, said the regulator had sought advice from a Queen's Counsel on whether it could mount a prosecution against Mr Baring and Mr Tuckey. To do so the SFA would have to prove they committed "an act of misconduct". There was no such evidence. Nevertheless, Mr Farrant said: "We sought and received undertakings from Mr Tuckey that are as powerful as the likely outcome of

formal disciplinary proceedings would have been had that route been available to us."

Alistair Darling, Labour's City spokesman, said: "Is it right that the most senior executives, who accepted large salaries and bonuses, can then depart voluntarily and leave subordinates to answer all the awkward questions?"

Pennington, page 27
Business letters, page 29

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□ Barings case shows need for more SFA powers □ Green signal for train operators □ D-Day approaches for Equitas

Bearing the blame

THE Barings fiasco still has the ability to fascinate and appal in equal measure. It fascinates, because a 28-year-old rogue trader beat what few checks and balances there were to prevent a City house from gambling away its entire capital. It appalls, because more than one year after the £360 million crash the tally of those managers who may be considered blameworthy in allowing such a disaster to happen and who have been called to account for failing to supervise Leeson's trading, is pitifully thin. Nick Leeson is serving a 6½ year prison sentence in Singapore. Chris Thompson, a not too senior Bank of England official, resigned after being criticised by the Board of Banking Supervision report over his role in monitoring Barings. But many, including senior Bank insiders, insist that Thompson was a convenient scapegoat to protect others.

The Securities and Futures Authority has investigated the role of 16 Barings executives, 11 of whom no longer have links with the merchant bank under the new ING ownership. Five face no further action and nine, who it must be said have also lost their jobs, have been charged with failing to act with due skill, care and diligence in monitoring Leeson's trading activities. They face penalties that range from

expulsion from certain SFA registers to a severe limitation on the work they may undertake in the securities industry for the foreseeable future. Some of the nine former Barings executives will also have to pay costs of around £10,000 and, in certain instances, more.

What has met with almost universal disbelief, and anger from the bond and preference shareholders who lost some £125 million, is that Barings's chairman Peter Baring and his deputy Andrew Tuckey, who both picked up lucrative bonuses courtesy of Leeson's bogus trading, appear to have gone unpunished. The fact that the SFA sought outside legal advice from a leading Queen's Counsel in its efforts to press charges against Messrs Baring and Tuckey indicates how hard it tried to live up to its hitherto hard-hitting City watchdog image.

Clearly that is not enough now. In its extensive de-brief on the Barings case the SFA must look closely at what new powers it needs to ensure sufficient disciplinary clout. The good news is that both the Treasury

and Labour's front bench appear willing to help the SFA so that whichever Government is in power the matter can be settled speedily. But the Barings debacle will not be truly over and ING, the new Dutch owner, will not be able to put the past firmly behind it, until investors have been properly compensated. This could take the form of an ex-gratia payment costing around £70 million. There is no onus on ING to do this other than that it would provide a happier footnote on which to end this sorry saga of gross incompetence, greedy mismanagement and lax regulation.

Rails that could be paved with gold

AFTER so many conflicting smoke signals from Labour, Railtrack marketers will not count their chickens before Tony Blair actually says what Labour will, or will not, do about the privatisation scheduled for May. The latest puffs suggest Labour may finally have abandoned its commitment to a publicly owned or even publicly controlled rail-



way system. You may need to apply a touch of deconstructionist technique to the sentences, but so long as Mr Blair does not pledge to scupper the sale, champagne corks will shuttle full steam between the Department of Transport and the Treasury. Railtrack's sagging sale price can start creeping up again.

Investors in Railtrack are unlikely, however, to be the main beneficiaries of any unspoken bipartisan approach to rail. As in any market, the best bargains are often struck by those who take on bits that must be sold but are not overly attractive.

In the railway break-up, this means train operating companies. Bus operators can add most value. No wonder they are

queuing up. In some cases, they can use a reform that was intended to boost competition to recreate a public transport monopoly. But stand-alone transport and utility operators have now also seen the advantage of taking on a regulated franchise if Whitehall and the regulators are on your side.

Sea Containers, which was distinctly huffy about the shortness of rail franchises, has gathered enough enthusiasm and bargaining skill to win pole position in the keen battle for the flagship East Coast Main Line, where it has had to compete with a strong management/employee bid. Générale des Eaux, the huge French utility operator, is still in with a good shout for Network South Central, the service City stockbrokers love to hate.

Générale des Eaux has had a happy experience of Britain's regulated industries, mainly because it has been able to assume the unlikely role of low-profile outsider. In water, it was deemed a worthy alternative to the ten privatised groups and has been able to duck under the political flak hitting local com-

panies. In cable, it was advantageously miscast as a David standing up to Goliath BT.

Prospects for train operators seemed so dim that the rules have been progressively changed in their favour to attract competitive interest, the only way the franchise director could keep subsidies within bounds. Now many think operators cannot lose, making Labour's passive hostility bearable. Subsidies should still be generous and multinational train operators will not face the constant hostile scrutiny that is bound to follow the potential "fat cats" of Railtrack or the privatised company's profits and dividends.

No dodging the column for Nelson

□ D-DAY for Equitas looms. The Department of Trade and Industry has set an unofficial Easter deadline for the decision on whether to license the reinsurance company being set up by Lloyd's of London to take over responsibility for risks insured in 1992 and prior years. It is by no

means a foregone conclusion that it will go through on the nod. Rigorous conditions could be attached but a licence should put an end to the misery.

How glad the President of the Board of Trade, Ian Lang, must be that his losses as a member of the Rose Thomson Young syndicate bar him from the discussions as they get more heated.

Many names have a strong view about what should happen after all chairmen of Lloyd's past and present have been hung, drawn and quartered. Meanwhile the professionals are keeping their fingers crossed that there will still be a Lloyd's to be vilified after D-Day.

Yesterday it was Mr Lang's turn to hear, along with other names, what the High Court could award him. Without the settlement and Equitas and assuming a limitless pot of funds he might be better off, which is a relative term for most names as they assess their indicative statements and try to come to terms with the final costs of their romance with Lloyd's.

As one of the litigating names he could not possibly adjudicate. Lucky old Anthony Nelson has no exposure to asbestos losses, and therefore will have to make the final decision, which is bound to leave at least half of the interested parties unhappy and after his blood.

Rexam fights back as profits slump

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

REXAM, the beleaguered paper and packaging group, sought yesterday to counter the impact of a 25 per cent decline in profits in 1995 with an optimistic statement on this year's prospects.

Rexam shares ended 14p higher at 374p after Michael Woodhouse, chairman, said: "We are hopeful of the second half particularly since, with a reduced cost base and new investments coming on stream, we can exploit conditions as they improve." But Mr Woodhouse added that the company anticipated the first half of this year to continue to be slow.

His comments came after Rexam announced a drop in pre-exceptional full-year profits to £185 million from £231 million. The company was hit last year by a huge increase in raw material costs followed by a decline in sales caused by customer destocking in the second half of the year. Overall turnover increased by 11

per cent to £2.45 billion primarily because of raw material inflation. The return on sales dropped from 10.1 per cent to 8 per cent. The total dividend was increased from 13.8p to 14.1p.

The coated products division was hit hardest with profits dropping 36 per cent to £31 million. Profits in the engineering and building products division also suffered because of the slowdown in Germany, falling 14 per cent to £43 million. But the paper and packaging division managed a small rise in profits to £115 million.

The company has begun the disposal of its Australian engineering division and said that several other non-core businesses would be sold. But Rexam denied that it wanted to dispose of its building or UK engineering interests. Shares in the company collapsed from a high of 517p to 328p last year after the company issued two profit

warnings. But the share price is beginning to climb back this year after the appointment of a new senior management team. Jeremy Lancaster, chairman of Wolseley, the builder, is due to become chairman on May 16, while Rolf Bjorjesson, chief executive of PLM, the Swedish packaging company, will take over as chief executive on July 1.

David Lyon, chief executive, said the company would be looking to increase its exposure in emerging markets over the coming year with particular emphasis on India. He anticipated that most growth would be organic but did not rule out making small bolt-on acquisitions.

The capital expenditure budget last year was reduced from £200 million to £188 million with the spend this year expected to amount to £150 million. A final dividend of 8p is payable on June 4.

Times, page 28

Argent lifts value of net assets

ARGENT, the property group which is backing the 1.1 million sq ft Brindleyplace development in Birmingham, raised its net asset value by 7 per cent to 287p in the year to December (Carl Mortished writes). Argent's retail and leisure investments grew 5.4 per cent in value after good rental growth, but office investments fell 5.5 per cent. Overall the portfolio grew less than 1 per cent.

Argent has boosted the retail content of its £263 million investment portfolio with the purchase of two shopping centres for £55 million.

Argent's rental income rose from £10.9 million to £15.4 million during the year, but annualised rental income at the year end from the 19 properties was £19.5 million. Pre-tax profits grew from £2.7 million to £13.6 million, including a £12 million development gain.

BSG considers dealership sale

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

BSG INTERNATIONAL revealed yesterday it was looking to spin off its motor dealership subsidiary by the end of the year.

Richard Marton, chief executive, said: "A disposal or management buyout of the Bristol Street car dealership is possible before the end of the year." He said a flotation was less likely because the company viewed the current market conditions as unsuitable.

Mr Marton made his comments after BSG unveiled a 60 per cent rise in full-year profits to £21.4 million. The company was also bullish about prospects for this year, saying that profits in the two core divisions, Bristol Street and Britax, were running ahead of last year, with raw materials price pressure easing and the car leasing market recovering. The break-up talk and

favourable results pleased the City. Shares rose 3p to 68.5p.

Overall turnover increased 18 per cent to £843 million. Britax, which manufactures automotive components and aircraft interiors, increased operating profits 33 per cent to £18 million, helped by a first-time contribution from the US mirrors business. The aircraft interiors operation recently won the substantial British Airways contract for first-class interiors and has been picked to provide toilet modules on the new generation of Boeing 737s. Bristol Street also increased operating profits 38 per cent to £14.3 million.

The total dividend was unchanged at 3.2p. Mr Marton said dividend cover had been improved from 1 to 1.6 times but was still below the 2 times target. A final dividend of 2.5p (2.5p) is payable on July 1.

Oftel to propose new BT price cap

By ERIC REGULY

OFTel, the telecommunications regulator, will this morning propose a new price cap that will set British Telecom's pricing structure, and hence the profit potential from its domestic operations, for the next four years. A Monopolies and Mergers Commission inquiry is likely if BT balks at the proposal.

Currently, BT must reduce its overall prices each year by the retail prices index minus 7½ per cent. The formula, which has saved consumers hundreds of millions of pounds on their bills, expires in July. BT has argued that a price cap has become unnecessary because market forces would make it almost impossible for it to raise prices.

The company, however, realises that the cap is unlikely to be eliminated in the short term. All it can hope for is that

the constraint will be less severe than the previous one. If it is not and BT rejects it, Oftel will have no choice but to recommend an MMC inquiry.

The relationship between BT and Oftel has been strained in recent months. Oftel accused BT of delaying the introduction of phone-number portability and BT said that Oftel's proposal to increase its powers to investigate anti-competitive behaviour was unacceptable.

□ BT is facing the prospect of a rebellion by its 19,000 middle managers, who rejected BT's pay offer two weeks ago. The company has offered a 4 per cent pay increase, but refuses to say how the extra cash will be spread around. Members of the Society of Telecom Executives union will vote over the next two weeks on industrial action, short of a strike.

Swire Pacific

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P D A Sutch
Chairman, Swire Pacific Limited
Hong Kong, 15th March 1996

HIGHLIGHTS

Profit before tax	US\$1,240M	+16%
Profit attributable to shareholders	US\$827M	+16%
Investment property portfolio	US\$8,209M	-1%
Net assets per share	US\$5.77	+1%
Earnings per share	US\$52.2	+16%
Dividends per share	US\$20.4	+14%

Notes:

- Amounts per share refer to 'A' shares. Entitlements of 'B' shareholders are in proportion 1 to 5 compared with those of 'A' shareholders.
- All the above figures have been translated from Hong Kong dollars into United States dollars at an exchange rate of US\$1 = HK\$7.80.
- Dividends are declared in Hong Kong dollars.

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL L. CLARK

UK traders still cautious despite New York boost

THE London stock market climbed briefly back above 3,700, as it again took heart from a strong performance overnight on Wall Street.

At one stage, the FT-SE 100 index climbed above 400 points, mostly reflecting the 90-point surge in the Dow Jones industrial average the previous evening. But with the Dow failing to hold on to an early lead in resumed trading, the index in London lost some of its impetus, closing 23.4 up at 3,693.0. Turnover swelled to 884 million shares.

But in spite of the market's resilient performance, traders remain cautious. Falling bond prices on both sides of the Atlantic are continuing to give cause for concern.

P&O stood out with a rise of 17p to 532p amid heavy support for the shares on the traded options market where investors were giving generously for the call. P&O has been a poor performer this year mainly due to increased competition for its ferry operation from the Channel link and the fact that most of its businesses continue to operate in struggling markets.

This has led to talk of a bid for the company, something that Lord Sterling, chairman, would fiercely resist. As a result, there is now talk that he is preparing to dispose of various parts of the business in an attempt to make the group ship-shape and better able to resist an unwanted bid.

The news that SBC Warburg, the securities house, had bought up a sizeable holding in *Lombard* came too late to affect the price, which finished 1 1/2p higher at 208p. Warburg now accounts for 5.65 per cent of the shares. Dealers say the news could lift the price when trading resumes today.

Guinness dropped 8p to 463p before figures tomorrow, with Credit Lyonnais Laing, the broker, becoming increasingly cautious about prospects. But Smiths Industries, the aerospace and mining equipment group, put on 10p to 694p encouraged by the news that Boeing, the US aircraft manufacturer, is increasing production.

BT held steady at 352p, awaiting publication today of the review from Ofel, the industry regulator, which will put a cap on price increases within the industry.

Meanwhile, recent speculation in Cable and Wireless appears to have sub-



Sitting pretty: Richard Marton of BSG International

sided for the time being with the shares slipping 2p to 483p as traders struggled to place a large line of stock overhanging the market. But speculators are refusing to rule out the possibility of BT making a bid for C&W at some stage.

The City breathed a sigh of relief at full-year figures from Rexam. The fact that they were no worse than feared enabled

Johnstone Press, the regional newspaper publisher, rose 23p to 198p, raising hopes of bumper figures next week. Speculators will be disappointed, with brokers still looking for profits of £17 million. It remains a thin market with brokers quoting a price in 3,000 shares at a time. Just 80,000 were traded yesterday.

the shares to close with a rise of 15p to 375p. As expected, pre-tax profits were down from £22m to £18m million after being hit by de-stocking, a drop in volume demand and rises in prices of paper and plastic resin.

The group has given warning that the current year has started badly. It expects profits in the first half to fall short of those in the corresponding

period. SBC Warburg, the broker, is believed to have cut its forecast for this year by £10 million to £190 million.

Suggestions that Lucas Industries is now vulnerable to a bid after this week's confirmation that George Simpson, chief executive, is leaving to take over from Lord Wein-

stock at GEC, unchanged at 359 1/2p, lifted Lucas shares 7p

to 199p. Half-year figures published yesterday showed pre-tax profits up almost 40 per cent to £6.6 million with the progress expected to be maintained in the second half.

A better than expected performance from Albright & Wilson, the chemicals specialist, lifted the price 14p to 85p. Pre-tax profits fell £9 million to £35 million and trading remains difficult. Any further

progress would have to be made by growing its phosphates business and cost cuts.

BSG International, the Britax car seatbelt and motor distributor, rose 3p to 68 1/2p on a rise in pre-tax profits last year from £15 million to £24 million.

Richard Marton, chief executive, said BSG was considering ways of splitting the two main businesses Britax and Bristol Street in a way that would offer the best benefit to shareholders. The most likely is selling of Bristol Street.

The National Lottery has left a dent in profits at Gus Carter, the bookmaker, losing its shares 1p to 64p. Pre-tax profits fell 44 per cent in the first half with extended opening hours eating into margins.

Eidos, the software technology specialist, surged 72p to a new high of 810p after signing a technology licensing agreement with the Oracle Corporation, the world's leading supplier of software for information management.

Pislon responded to news of a virtual doubling of pre-tax profits last year with a 60p leap to £10.15. Optimistic comments on prospects failed to offset a disappointing profits performance and the warning of worse to come from Graham Group, off 14p at 185p.

GILT-EDGED: Prices drifted lower in thin trading with investors awaiting today's Retail Sales numbers and tomorrow's inflation figures. The announcement by the Bank of England of details of the next auction accelerated losses. The plan is to issue a further £3 billion of Treasury 7 per cent 2010 for the auction on March 27. Yesterday the Bank issued extra tranches of stock. This included £150 million of index-linked Treasury 2 1/2 per cent 2009 and £150 million of index-linked Treasury 2 1/2 per cent 2010. In the futures pit, the June series of the Long Gilt closed off 5 1/2 at £104 2 1/2, in thin trading that saw 36,000 contracts traded. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2015 fell £1 1/2 to £96 1 1/2, while in shorts, Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was two ticks easier at £103 3 1/2.

NEW YORK: On Wall Street, shares were mixed at midday, with some investors taking profits after Monday's rally and a strong start to the session. The US long bond was unchanged to yield 6.71 per cent and the Dow Jones industrial average was up 7.95 at 5,691.55.

COMMODITIES

LONDON COMMODITY EXCHANGE

ICE-ICE (London 6.00pm)

CRUDE OILS (\$/barrel FOB)

ICE-ICE (London 6.00pm)

CRUDE OILS (\$/barrel FOB)

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ICE-ICE (London 6.00pm)

CRUDE OILS (\$/barrel FOB)

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):

Dow Jones 5691.55 (+7.95)

S&P Composite 653.71 (+1.06)

Tokyo:

Nikkei Average 20442.60 (+157.47)

Hong Kong:

Hang Seng 10880.50 (+279.22)

Amsterdam:

EOE Index 527.50 (+3.11)

Sydney:

AO 2256.3 (+21.7)

Frankfurt:

DAX 2493.26 (+30.10)

Singapore:

SEAC 2385.30 (+23.85)

Brussels:

General 6721.20 (+11.35)

Paris:

CAC-40 1967.20 (+2.18)

Zurich:

SKA Gen 768.90 (+1.03)

London:

FT 30 2759.0 (+15.2)

FT 100 3693.0 (+23.4)

FTSE Mid 250 4274.2 (+20.7)

FTSE 250 1056.2 (+12.2)

FTSE Euroshare 100 1608.65 (+16.45)

FT A-Share 1835.38 (+11.99)

FT Non Financials 1935.25 (+10.48)

FT Piped Interest 110.96 (+0.33)

FT Govt Sec 92.09 (+0.13)

Bargains 4162

SEAQ Volume 984.1M

USM (Chicago) 207.9 (+0.1)

US 1.5323 (+0.0013)

German Mark 2.2630 (+0.0042)

Exchange Index 83.7 (+0.1)

Bank of England official close 10.14

ECU 1.1943

ESR 1.0468

1502 Jan 0.7% Jan 1987-100

1993 Jan 0.7% Jan 1987-100

RFK 1.1943

RECENT ISSUES

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Life Of Opps PP (100) 52 - 1

M & G Equity Cap 22 - 1

M & G Equity Div 90 - 1

M & G Equity Inc 43 - 1

MacDonald Htl (145) 186 - 1

Primary Htl (104) 103 - 1

Schneider UK G US 549 - 6

Stadium Group (120) 139 - 3

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Visual Action (185) 232 - 1

RISES:

Kingbury Grp 223p (+14p)

Fired Earth 78p (+11p)

Johnstone Press 185p (+23p)

Albright & Wilson 185p (+14p)

Birby 159p (+11p)

Half Eng 210p (+12p)

Nelson Hunt 178p (+10p)

Yorke Chem 274p (+16p)

Reyon Group 309p (+16p)

BTP 309p (+15p)

Mitel 382p (+18p)

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REXAM 375p (+15p)

Oxford Inst 480p (+17p)

Callaghan 436p (+18p)

Bowthorpe 436p (+18p)

Black (ASC) 335p (+10p)

Chemring 407p (+12p)

GMG 478p (+13p)

London & Man 403p (+10p)

Scott 809p (+14p)

Facal Elect 323p (+9p)

Young 217p (+9p)

Austin Reed 217p (+9p)

London Clubs 518p (+13p)

FALLS:

Graham Group 184p (-15p)

SIG 230p (-13p)

Totum Hot 304p (-11p)

Telapac 810p (-18p)

Smithline 659p (-14p)

Guinness 468p (-8p)

Unitech 678p (-10p)

Danka Sys 683p (-7p)

Closing Prices Page 31

TEMPUS

Stuck in a low gear

IF George Simpson opens a few windows in the dusty rooms at GEC headquarters, all to the good; but his departure from Lucas, where he leaves some unfinished business, is a blow. In his two short years as chief executive, the former Rover boss has done much to change Lucas into a company that can sell the right products at the right price to a more demanding car industry.

Sales growth, at an underlying 5 per cent in the first half, is now outpacing the market, producing a long-overdue profit recovery. Thanks to judicious investment in new plants, and acquisitions, that should continue but two factors cause concern. First, the pressure on margins from car assemblers who reject any attempt to pass on rising raw material costs. Second, Lucas is in a vulnerable position in the second rank of an industry

where, increasingly, leader takes all. The need for a strategic partner is self-evident. Lucas needs a bigger customer base to support the burden of its rising research and development expenditure. It also suffers from £90 million of unrelieved ACT and if Lucas is not to move offshore, it needs to make more profit from its UK businesses to offset the ACT liability.

Lucas could make profits of £180 million to £190 million, which values the shares at 16 years' earnings on a yield of about 4.5 per cent, in line with the market average. That sounds reasonable for a company likely to stay in low gear. With car production falling in Europe and the United States, the Lucas strategy will take years to pay off: a dull outlook, unless an opportunist predator takes a potshot at Lucas before Mr Simpson's successor is crowned.

Rexam

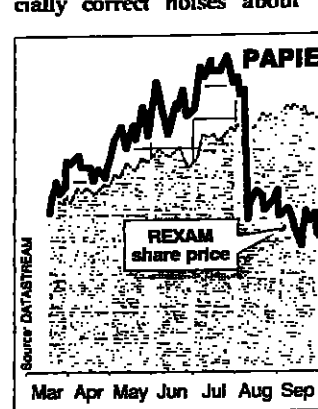
A BRUISED and battered Rexam chose yesterday not to gloss over a terrible 1995 but to spell out the problems that took its management by surprise. The company has been on the receiving end of a double whammy - a huge increase in both paper and plastic prices, followed by the loss of sales as leading customers destocked.

It seems unlikely that the company will be caught out again this year by market conditions that the management describe as freakish. Raw material prices have decreased from last year's high and seem to be stabilising at more comfortable levels. The destocking process, which is common across the economy, is expected to end by the middle of this year.

But by the company's own admission, the overhang

PAPIER MÂCHÉ

from last year looks set to prevent profits bouncing back to 1994 levels. Early predictions suggest £195 million, well short of the £231 million achieved in 1994, and placing the shares on an unexciting forward price earnings ratio of about 14. For longer-term growth, the company is making commercially correct noises about



Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar

Albright & Wilson

CHEMICALS have not yet come in from the cold but they are at least beginning to sense spring. With the worst of the raw material price volatility now behind the sector, companies can stop pruning their operations and invest in some growth.

Albright & Wilson, which came to the market last year, has fared better than some of its competitors. The chemicals group wants to raise the proportion of sales generated by new products with a target of 20 per cent of global sales coming from new products by 1998. Today, that percentage stands at 16 and the company is within striking distance of its goal.

A strategy based on pushing new products rather than chasing market share is sensible for a small company supplying the food and household products giants. While a new product can pay

off quickly, market share gains are often won at the expense of price cuts.

New money spinners are more likely to generate further new products and in the longer term should leave Albright less exposed to margin pressure from large customers and the extremes of the chemical cycle.

Clyde

WITH Iraqi oil exports looming over the horizon, any oil exploration share looks a touch risky. Today, a barrel of oil will cost you \$20 but the June forward price is \$2 cheaper and September Brent is only \$17, a clear warning that the oil market is expecting a soggy summer, bad news for companies like Clyde Petroleum.

On conservative oil price forecasts, Clyde shares are at a hefty premium to net asset value. That can be justified to some extent by expectations that Clyde's management will continue to do imagin-

ative deals, using their skill at getting more value out of marginal fields rejected by bigger oil companies who operate with higher costs.

But there are other reasons why Clyde shares look expensive to certain investors. In the US, oil shares are valued on multiples of cash flow and Clyde, currently trading at some three times cash flow per share is well below typical multiples of four to five times boasted by its American peers.

The comparison is crude and ignores important differences: most US companies operate onshore and therefore need to spend less replacing reserves, leaving more cash in the company. Another worry for Clyde is a rising tax charge from high-tax Indonesian oil. But North Sea oil companies are a useful hunting ground for Americans seeking cheap barrels, and Clyde is among the more attractive targets.

EDITED BY CARL MORTISHED

P&O: SHARES SUPPORTED BY DEMAND IN THE OPTIONS MARKET



Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec Jan Feb Mar

COMMODITIES

LONDON COMMODITY EXCHANGE

ICE-ICE (London 6.00pm)

CRUDE OILS (\$/barrel FOB)

ICE-ICE (London 6.00pm)

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THE
TIMESCITY
DIARYFeeding time at
Lloyds-TSB

NOW that Lord Weinstock has named his successor at GEC, interest is focusing on who is headed for the hot seat at Lloyds TSB Group, when Sir Brian Pitman steps down as chief executive next year.

Candidates from inside and outside the bank are being invited to a series of dinners with the bank's directors in gentlemen's clubs. Word reaches me from the offices around the yellow lino on the executive floor in Lombard Street, that Andrew Longhurst, chief executive of the Cheltenham & Gloucester, taken over by Lloyds last year has decided to forgo the pleasure of any more intimate suppers and the job to keep his athletic figure in trim.

Looks like Peter Ellwood, deputy chief executive may need to work out a little more, while Alan Moore, his joint deputy, and joint favourite is so slight that insiders say he needs feeding up.

Lighting-up

SIR Jack Stewart-Clark, former managing director of Philips Electrical and vice president of the European Parliament, is opening the doors of his family home in Scotland to businessmen and to-be-weds. Sir Jack, who grew up in the wilds of Dundas Castle, which boasts its own cricket pitch and views of the River Forth, is busy refurbishing its fourteenth-century keep for corporate entertainment and wedding ceremonies. He has already called in a team from Philips to create some "romantic" lighting.



Stewart-Clark: own pitch

Different world

A SIGN of the times at Forté headquarters in High Holborn, where under Sir Rocco's reign only pictures of his exclusive hotels appeared in the lobby. Now, under the down to earth Granada boys, pictures of the mid-market Posthouse and Travelodge have replaced them.

Side by side

SOMEWHAT bored by the slumbering property market, Michael Slade, chief executive of Helical Bar, has put some of his spare cash into Malaysian gold mines. The vehicle, Avocet Mining, which was set up by two former Anglo American executives, is set to take over a Vancouver-quoted company before heading for a £10 million placing and London listing at the end of this month. And who persuaded Mr Slade to back a Vancouver mining stock? Step forward Nigel McNair Scott, chairman of Avocet, who performs his day job as Helical Bar's finance director.

Indirect line

DIRECT LINE's ubiquitous red telephone — a high-tech £50,000 motorised work of art with its own steel carrying case — has come a long way since its first shoot for the insurance company. "It was never intended to jump," admits an insider. "But when we were filming the first television commercials, it got caught on a piece of carpet and leapt forward."

Labour joins suitors anxious to woo small business vote

Philip Bassett
weighs Blair's
bid to conquer
a traditional
Tory fiefdom

Britain's 3.6 million small businesses are again the target in the pre-election battleground. After a range of new Conservative initiatives for small business announced by the Prime Minister last week, today is Tony Blair's turn as new Labour makes its pitch at business by directly addressing the concerns of small companies in the UK.

At a much-trumpeted London conference, John Major said that small business was "crucial to the future well-being of the UK". Today, at a conference for small business organised by the now independent Industry Forum — a body set up by Labour to smooth contacts between business and the party — Mr Blair will spell out Labour's approach, including new computer-based information services aimed at giving small firms the practical advice and help they need.

That the two major political parties are making such an obvious effort to woo Britain's small firms indicates how seriously each side now views the economic importance of small business. And, of course, their electoral importance. "There's a general election looming," says Stephen Alambritis, parliamentary officer of the Federation of Small Business, who will address the conference. "And there are five million votes in this."

Is it quite as crude as that? Well, politics is politics, and, as employers of that number of people, how small firms are doing is crucial to the "feel-good" factor that each party wants to engender.

Government figures show that three quarters of Britain's small businesses have no employees other than their founder and operator. And evidence from the authoritative British Social Attitudes survey shows that the self-employed, the very embodiment of the Conservatives' enterprise philosophy, are almost twice as likely to vote Tory than are employees generally.

Not any more, insists Labour. "It's not automatic territory for them," says Margaret Beckett, Labour's Trade and Industry spokeswoman, who will open today's proceedings. "In fact, it's territory they have taken for granted for years. They just keep saying 'more small businesses', without worrying about the problems



Margaret Beckett, who insists her party best understands the needs of small businesses

they have created for them." Mrs Beckett maintains that small firms have been hit disproportionately by the two deep recessions of the Conservative years — in particular by the policy of using interest rate levels as the main lever of economic management. The dependence of small firms on bank financing means that with high interest rates, their borrowing costs are high and the likelihood of overdraft money being called in is high.

Ian Peters, head of the NatWest's small firms unit, who will join the Institute of Directors, the British Chambers of Commerce, the principal small business organisations, and the Prince of Wales's Youth Business Trust, at today's gathering, suggests small firms are still being hit, with a 35 per cent fall in the number of start-up businesses in 1995 compared with five years earlier.

Research suggests that all the political parties have considerable ground to make up in the small firms sector.

Detailed work — actually funded, ironically, by the Government's Economic and Social Research Council — carried out by the Small Business Research Centre at Kingston University shows, as the illustrations indicate, a scepticism about any party being best for small firms.

But Labour has cause to be pleased by the findings, with three fifths of the sample of small companies surveyed either viewing a future Labour government as having no effect or a beneficial effect on their business. A majority of small firms also see the minimum wage, one of Labour's key business policies, as having no effect.

Kingston's study concludes that its findings amount to "a rejection of the support for small firms which all the Conservative administrations since 1979 have proclaimed to be central to their policies". It adds that "if the Labour Party, whose support for small business while positive is by no means central to their policies, is perceived as likely to help or at least be neutral by the owner-managers, then the practical appeal of Conservative policies can no longer be regarded as strong".

Barbara Roche, Labour's small business spokeswoman, agrees. "We believe that small businesses are vital to the creation of wealth and jobs, and for innovation," she says. "Small business knows Labour is aware of that, and they are aware too of the realities they have faced for the past 17 years."

Ms Roche has hammered the Government hard on one of the key questions for small business: that of late payment. She has forced an embarrassing series of disclosures on the poor payment practices of Whitehall departments to the extent that the powerful all-party Commons Public Accounts Committee is now considering an investigation into the Government's payment record if its performance

does not improve.

Late payment was a key feature of Mr Major's small business speech last week, with the Prime Minister favouring a statutory requirement on companies to declare their payment performance in annual reports. A consultation exercise with small business has given ministers the opportunity to hold fire again on the issue, to the fury of the Institute of Management, which attacks the Government, and Mr Major in particular, for failing to act decisively on late payment.

Labour will also exploit divisions between Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, and Michael Heseltine, Deputy Prime Minister, over his proposal to remove a range of legal employment protection from workers in small firms — heightening general fears about job security. Poll evidence commissioned by trade unions suggests that the idea may cost the Conservatives votes, with 64 per cent of those questioned by NOP saying such a move would make them less likely to vote Tory.

John Monks, TUC General Secretary, says: "Conservative electoral strategists must be turning Mr Heseltine's plans have diverted attention from the Prime Minister's modest plans for small businesses that make good sense." Neither has Mr Heseltine's gaffe about late payment — the reporting of which he is said to be intensely irritated about — has not helped the Government's small business standing.

Small business, of course, wants something from a possible future Labour government. It wants macroeconomic stability, it wants as little regulation as possible — Labour claims, to some scepticism, that it is seen less as a party of regulation now — and it wants certain specific measures, too. For instance, Stephen Hall, director-general of the British Venture Capital Association, will urge Labour to reform capital gains tax to help to provide finance for new business start-ups.

In spite of its confidence, and its insistence that on issues like one-stop advice shops and late payment its policies have been in place longer than the Government's, Labour recognises it probably has a good-sized hill to climb in persuading small firms of the value to them — or, at least, the lesser threat — of a Labour government.

But its leaders insist that Labour has not only come a long way on the issue, but — audaciously — that it is now closer to small business than the Tories. "We have listened and talked to small business for a long time now," says Mrs Beckett, "and we have really taken on board both their needs and their concerns. We are where the Government would like to be."

ANTHONY
HARRIS

Two attempts to tackle the EU jobs crisis

Despite all the wishful EMU talk, most responsible Europeans now recognise the really urgent problem is not convergence in a gloomy sense, we already have too much. It is, as Jacques Santer proclaims, unemployment, which has not only undermined budget plans, but is beginning to provoke ugly protectionist talk even against fellow members of the EU. Santer's proposal for Europe-wide public works (which could only have been dreamed up in Brussels) has not appealed to members already struggling with excessive borrowing, but some are at last coming up with solutions of their own.

Most of us think we know what is working. Sweden (like its non-member neighbour, Finland) has taken the British route: unpeg the mark, and share the joys of export-led, low-inflation growth. The international bond market has awarded large prizes to those who had faith in this market solution. Germany, on the other hand, remains hopelessly over-valued despite the belated cuts in interest rates, and although labour flexibility is now being discussed at a company level, that looks trivial when measured against Germany's well-known rigidities and cost-inflationary habits. Even the Germans are switching into Swiss francs. It is a picture which appeals to the Basil Fawlty in us all.

However, distance, in this case, lends distortion to the view. Time spent in the company of a major Swedish multinational has provided a new perspective. Why, the Swedes wanted to know, are foreigners so positive about their country? Just try doing business there. Unemployment is rising, despite better growth, for all the familiar reasons — downsizing and the rest. The results for the budget are dire.

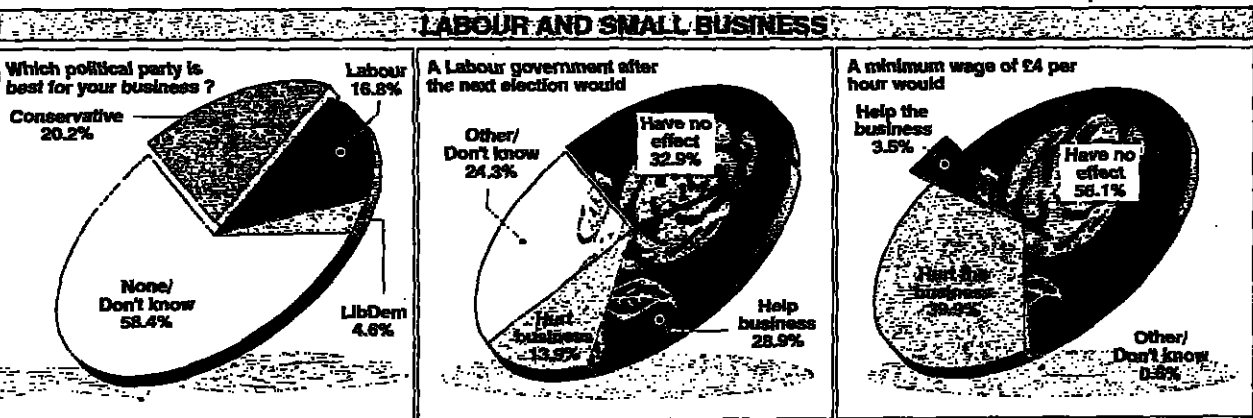
This is not surprising, given the almost unbelievable generosity of the Swedish dole. A worker on average wages gets 83 per cent of his previous income, and a poorer colleague on two-thirds of average pay gets no less than 90 per cent. This is half again as high as in Finland, and more than three times as

much as in the UK. Swedish unemployment, you might conclude, is responding quite naturally to higher pay. Meanwhile, business cost economies are passed back almost undiluted to the taxpayer. The combination of job insecurity now and a higher tax bill in prospect is naturally depressing home demand; exports are indeed higher, but that is limited comfort. NatWest has this week described the reputed Swedish virtuous circle as an illusion: my Swedish friends strongly agree.

They are not much more upbeat about Germany, which is their biggest market and a major manufacturing centre for them; but here the news may be a good deal better than is yet apparent. The Economics Minister, Theo Waigel, has come up with a really good idea: cut the bloated cost of social security contributions, the German tax on jobs, and pay for the deficiency through higher VAT. Perhaps a rise of as much as 5 per cent. The details are still shrouded in pre-election secrecy, since this will hardly be popular.

However, Julian Jessop of HSBC has penetrated the smokescreen with some official estimates. The nub is that a 5 per cent VAT increase would cut employment costs by 3.5 per cent. If the German trade unions did not claim compensation for the rise in retail prices, that would create 300,000 jobs in about three years. Meanwhile, the mere announcement would unleash a beat-the-Budget mini-boom in consumer spending, relieving German industry of much onerous over-stock.

A drop in the ocean? An inadequate back-door devaluation? Yes, if you look only at the fact that German employment costs are about twice those in the US; but the principle of the thing is so encouraging. The non-wage costs of the social market economy are beginning to look crippling, and the best way of removing free-lunch illusions is to make the workers pay more directly for their own benefits. A small proposed step on a long road; but at least a step in a sane direction.



BUSINESS LETTERS

Lloyd's offer is one to accept gratefully... or one that raises questions

From R. F. May
Sir, As one of the new relatively wealthy, after selling a business, and without much persuasion, I joined Lloyd's in 1988, though being cautious enough to write a minimum £250,000. Three years of losses later, I resigned and hastened to litigate to recover losses approaching £40,000.

So now we have an idea of finality — in my case an additional £35,000 — and the whole enterprise will have cost nearly 25 per cent of my line, something short of £50,000 after tax.

A typical case, perhaps not, and I am eternally grateful not to be counted among those unfortunate souls who have lost everything and suffered accordingly. But, with hind-

sight, the finality cost compares favourably with losses many of us faced one day in October 1987.

I will accept Lloyd's offer with alacrity, sadder and wiser maybe, after an expensive investment decision.

A personal guarantee in a commercial enterprise has always had consequences known to the guarantors and we had the opportunity to meet and judge those managers and underwriters whether roguish or merely incompetent lurking in any organisation. Many of us broke the cardinal rule by investing in a business or dealing with agents we knew little about.

I suggest that the additional investment, whether massaged or not in Equitas, of Barings. The prospect of this sort of disciplinary action must instil a chill terror in the hearts of all those working in the City.

Yours faithfully,
D. M. PETERMAN,
Scarlets Lane,
Wargrave,
Berks.

provides a surer shield at a cheaper cost than fighting alone against rafts of lawyers who may not be bent, but are certainly bent on getting richer.

Yours faithfully,
R. F. MAY,
Long Ridge,
Sutton,
Macclesfield,
Cheshire.

From J. D. Burrows
Sir, Members of Lloyd's are receiving the settlement offer to cap their liability.

But what precisely is this liability that we are alleged to have? In my case, and it seems, the majority, it arises from unquantifiable asbestosis claims and from unpredictable costs of clearing deliberately dumped noxious waste material, which subsequent legislation required retrospectively.

I have tried over many years to obtain evidence to establish my obligation and justify taking steps to remedy the position. So far all I have been able to obtain from my agents is the 35-page, 1995 Found Document, Keene Corporation v Insurance Company of North America, where it was held that exposure to asbestos

causes "bodily injury" and that "the policies that were issued to Keene relieved Keene of the risk of liability for latent injury of which Keene could not be aware when it purchased insurance". It is stated, "When Keene purchased the policies, it could have reasonably expected that it was free of the risk of becoming liable for injuries of which it could not have been aware prior to its purchase of the insurance".

The US Court states: "We conclude that the insurer is liable in full, subject to the other insurance provision." If Keene, the insured, and therefore the proposer of the insurance, could not have been aware of the risk of liability how could we the insurer, have been aware? Or my agent can only insure that of which we are made aware at inception of the policy.

I need answers to these basic questions before I can even consider Lloyd's offer to settle a risk of liability it appears I cannot have.

Yours faithfully,
J. D. BURROWS,
Copyhold,
Church Lane,
Bury,
Pulborough,
West Sussex.

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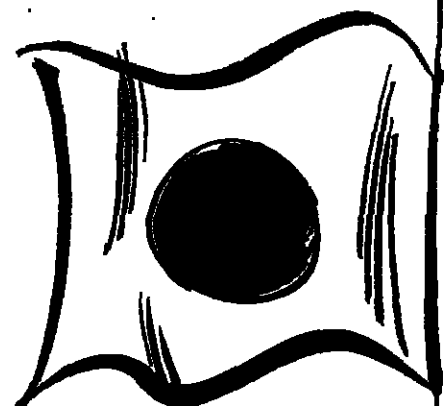
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David Mansfield, chief executive of Nottingham Group Holdings, and Richard French, finance director, hope that new products will help fuel future growth after the educational equipment supplier reported pre-tax profits of £6.9 million in the year to December 31 and a final dividend of 3.9p, giving 7.5p (5.5p) for year

Albright & Wilson beats malaise with expansion

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

ALBRIGHT & WILSON, which makes ingredients for household products including detergents, toothpaste and Coca-Cola as well as chemicals for industrial use, brushed aside most of the malaise which has hit the chemicals sector to increase pre-tax profits 24 per cent.

The chemicals company, which was spun off from Tenneco, the US oil company, last year and returned to the London Stock Exchange after a 17-year absence, made pre-tax profits of £55 million for the year to December 31.

Robin Paul, chief executive, said that the worst of the raw material price rises which

have stalked most chemicals divisions for the past two years was over. Last year the company spent £43 million extra on raw materials, a 10 per cent rise on the previous year.

Fuelling Albright's growth against adverse market conditions was the company's boost to capacity in its phosphates, focusing on higher value products in surfactants output.

Its confidence in phosphates was underlined last November when the company began a £8.5 million expansion of a purified phosphoric acid plant at Whitehaven, Cumbria, which will deliver an extra 30,000 tonnes per year and

produce more high-purity acids. But, despite a strong performance in its first year back on the market, Albright has ruled out any big acquisitions or significant shifts of focus.

Dr Paul said it plans organic growth and also to make several disposals of activities that are not part of mainstream chemicals.

The company — which is committed to producing 20 per cent of world sales from new products by 1998 — introduced several goods, particularly in specialty chemicals, last year.

In that division, a water treatment product and a corrosion protection agent stimu-

lated significant sales after winning US environmental protection agency approval. Albright's new products — those brought on to the market within the past five years — account for 16 per cent of its global turnover.

Albright took a £5 million charge to cover job reductions and a reorganisation at its Spanish operation as well as job losses across its specialty chemicals division and at its head office.

The final dividend, which is payable on May 22, was set at 4.35p, making a total for the year of 6.5p.

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Review will see up to 500 jobs lost at Claremont

By SARAH BAGNALL

CLAREMONT GARMENTS, the clothing manufacturer, yesterday said it was to axe up to 500 jobs as part of a strategic review aimed at boosting its flagging profits.

The news came as the company reported a slide in pre-tax profits from £15 million to £12.9 million in the year to December 30.

Profits suffered from the combined impact of a significant fall in second half sales, the need to reduce prices in order to generate sales and rising raw material costs.

The result was worse than City analysts expected having already cut their forecasts by about £2 million in December when Claremont warned that profits would be similar to the previous year's level.

Peter Wiegand, chairman, said: "We regard this as an



Wiegand: announced review

unacceptable result." The company, which supplies more than 90 per cent of its output to Marks & Spencer, managed to lift sales from £158.6 million to £172.9 million, with like-for-like sales ahead 5 per cent.

Mr Wiegand said the re-

view "involves a thorough and comprehensive examination and overhaul of all our principal business processes, systems and organisational structures, with nothing seen as sacrosanct".

It aims to increase gross margins, which are under pressure, and to cut overheads. Mr Wiegand said 1996 profits would be hit by the £6 million cost of implementing the review's conclusions but that this would be outstripped by the resulting benefits to overheads. The news prompted analysts to cut their forecasts for 1996. He added that margins remain under pressure.

The final dividend was lifted from 5p to 5.25p, making a total for the year of 9.65p, up from 9p. The dividend, due July 1, is being paid out of earnings of 16.1p, down from 20.7p. The shares were down 1p at 242p.

Kingsbury lifted by sales surge

By SARAH BAGNALL

SHARES of Kingsbury Group, the furniture retailer that came to the market last June, rose sharply yesterday on the back of a 50 per cent leap in underlying profits in the year to December 23.

Pre-tax profits before exceptional items rose from £2.7 million to £4.1 million on sales ahead 26 per cent at £78.3 million. The inclusion of £800,000 of costs relating to the group's flotation reduced pre-tax profits to £3.2 million.

The shares rose 34p to 223p, compared to the flotation price of 100p. The group, formed from the remnants of high street casualties Waring & Gillow and Maples, specialises in out-of-town centres.

Kingsbury also said that Denis Cassidy, chairman, and part of the management team that refocused the group and restored its fortunes, was to leave the board at the company's annual meeting on May 2. He is to be replaced by Struan Wiley, who joined as a non-executive director in November.

The final dividend of 2p makes a total for the year of 3p, up from 2p. The dividend, due May 10, is being paid out of pre-exceptional earnings of 10.6p a share, up from 7.1p.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

SIG pays £38m for German distributor

SIG, the former Sheffield Insulation Group, yesterday furthered its European expansion by buying into Germany's distribution network covering its core areas of insulation and related products. SIG bought WKT Group for £38.9 million and acquired a half share in Golinzi Group for £7.5 million.

Norman Adsett, chairman, said that the purchases would provide a platform for the company to establish itself as a major European distributor of insulation goods.

SIG's pre-tax profits in 1995 rose by 22 per cent, to £24.1 million, which included a small contribution from Komfort Systems, an insulation materials producer acquired last year. SIG, which stands to benefit from higher insulation standards for new buildings introduced last year, was upbeat about its prospects for this year. Mr Adsett, who is to retire next month, also forecast growth in industrial and commercial building activity in 1996. The final dividend, due on May 15, is 4.4p, lifting the total to 6.6p, up 10 per cent on 1994.

Antofagasta's 104% rise

ANTOFAGASTA, the London-quoted mining and banking group, has unveiled a 104 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £78.2 million for 1995, helped by increased mining production and high copper prices. Antofagasta, which is majority-owned by the Luksic family of Chile and Banco Central Hispanoamericano, is paying an increased dividend of 6.5p for the year, up 30 per cent, of which the final 4.5p is payable on June 27. The group said lower prices for metals are likely this year, which will have some effect on all its companies.

Secure bonus dividend

SECURE TRUST, the financial services group, is making a special 10p dividend payment as it celebrates the tenth anniversary of a management buyout. Its shares rose 20p on the news, closing at 515p. The special payment makes a total dividend for the year of 28p, up 70 per cent on the previous year, and is due with the final dividend of 12.5p on May 20. Pre-tax profits for 1995 were 9 per cent higher at £9.2 million. The firm said its personal financial services business and its private and merchant banking arm increased profitability.

Gus Carter tumbles

FULL-YEAR profits at Gus Carter, the bookmaker, blamed competition from the National Lottery for a 44 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £611,000 in 1995. Overall turnover increased by 3.3 per cent to £45 million but declined by 2.4 per cent on a like-for-like basis. Gus Carter is paying a maiden dividend of 1p due on April 25. The company was floated in May at 80p but a profits warning in the autumn caused the share price to tumble and the company has since been at the centre of takeover rumours.

Whatman lifts payout

PRE-TAX profits at Whatman, the specialities technology specialist company, fell to £8.8 million in 1995 from £10.7 million after a £2.5 million charge against restructuring. The company is lifting the total dividend 5.4 per cent to 11.8p a share, with a 7.8p final, payable from earnings that fell to 23.5p a share from 29.82p. David Smith, the director of research and development, takes over as chief executive on the retirement of Colin Knight.

Appleyard ahead

APPLEYARD GROUP, the motor distribution company, lifted pre-tax profits by 9 per cent, to £8.8 million, in 1995, in spite of adverse market conditions. The company said that final-quarter trading in its passenger car division was as difficult as at any time in the last recession. Earnings per share were 8.8p, up 5 per cent. A 3.1p final dividend lifts the total to 6.2p, from 5.8p. The company said that action to counteract weakness in the retail sector would lift the passenger car division this year.

Delphi final higher

DELPHI GROUP, the human resources company serving the information technology industry, has increased the total dividend for 1995 by 50 per cent to 4.5p a share, paying a 3p final. Pre-tax profits were £9 million last year and earnings were 25.42p a share. In 1994 the company's continuing businesses earned profits of £3.6 million but net exceptional charges of £4 million resulted in a pre-tax loss of £391,000.

Hampden Homecare up

HAMPDEN HOMECARE, the retailing group based in Northern Ireland, lifted profits to £1.5 million before tax in 1995 from £876,000 previously. The company, which operates franchises for Texas Homecare, Allied Carpets and Kwik-Fit Holdings in Ulster and the Republic of Ireland, is lifting the total dividend to 2p a share from 1.2p, payable from earnings of 6.3p (3.57p). The final dividend of 1.5p is due June 28.

James Fisher advances

JAMES FISHER AND SONS, the shipping company, saw pre-tax profits jump to £5.3 million in 1995 from £2.8 million in 1994. A £7 million surplus from selling ships lifted operating profits from shipping to £10.7 million. Losses from continuing port activities fell to £1.99 million (£2.7 million), but there were restructuring charges of £2.89 million. Earnings, adjusted for exceptional costs and discontinued operations, were 12.14p a share (6.33p). The total dividend doubles to 2p with a 1.5p final.

FIG flotation seeks £6.6m

By PHILIP PANGALOS

FIRST Information Group (FIG), the independent multimedia production company specialising in CD-Roms for the consumer market, will be capitalised at £37 million when it floats on the Alternative Investment Market (AIM) next week.

FIG is looking to raise £6.6 million through a placing to reduce debt and to fund the development and production of further titles. KPMG Corporate Finance is the nominat-

ed adviser and Charterhouse Tilney the broker. Dealings begin on Monday.

The company was founded in 1980 by a team of television broadcasters. Chrysalis Group acquired the business in 1988 and developed it into a multimedia producer, before selling to the current management team in 1993. The new management team expanded the company's multimedia activities into the production and distribution of its own consumer titles under the FlagTower brand.

Primary Health Properties, which has been formed to invest in healthcare properties such as doctors' surgeries, has floated on the Alternative Investment Market, raising £19.4 million through a placing by Collins Stewart & Co.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

LEGAL NOTICES

LOE & CO LIMITED
Notified under Section 75(1) of the Companies Act 1985
Notice is hereby given that the annual general meeting of the company will be held at 12th March 1996, at 12.00 noon, at the registered office of the company, 12th March 1996, for the purpose of electing directors and auditors and for the purpose of approving the accounts for the year ended 31st December 1995.

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Order of the High Court of Justice (Chancery Division) dated the 13th day of March 1996, confirming the reduction of the capital of the above-named company from £20,000,000 to £17,000,000 and of the constitution of its Share Premium Account in accordance with the above-mentioned Act and the Minute approved by the Court, is hereby published for the information of the members of the company and of the creditors of the company who are entitled to object to the reduction of the capital of the company and to the constitution of its Share Premium Account in accordance with the above-mentioned Act and the Minute approved by the Court.

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They've invested over £1 billion in Livingston, and it's still rising.

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MUSIC 1

If Claudio Abbado wants to fight the "compilation" culture, he is entering the fray very late



MUSIC 2

Daniele Gatti is equally at home with Bruckner and Mozart, as he enjoys a final fling with the LSO

THE TIMES ARTS



MUSIC 3

After his triumph in Europe, Woody Allen brings his clarinet to London for a fun-filled night of jazz



TOMORROW

The world according to toys: Disney's new animated film *Toy Story* lifts the lid on childhood friends

Who killed the great dictators?



What has prompted Claudio Abbado — the most mild-mannered of men — to take his own record company to court for chopping up his old Mahler recordings and using them on a cheap compilation disc? The short answer is that Abbado, conductor of the Berlin Philharmonic (and therefore a pretty big cheese in orchestral life), believes that he has legal rights which prevent such demeaning, mix and match treatment of his performances. The court proceedings should be fun. I hope the judge is musical.

The long answer is gloomier. This is no isolated spat between maestro and record company. The issue of compilation discs goes to the heart of a malaise in the classical music world. Compilations often vastly outsell new recordings; they are cheap to produce; they are usually of reasonable quality; and they appear to offer — like Classic FM — a painless way into musical appreciation for the unconverted.

The problem is that the unconverted never seem to take the next step: the one that requires them to buy a ticket for a concert. Since compilation discs and Classic FM came on stream (both took off in the early 1990s), concert attendances have plunged, not risen. Indeed, the soundbite culture of the compilation disc seems actively to discourage attendance at a "boring" concert of symphonies.

Thus, orchestras are threatened on two fronts. They aren't getting recording work, because record companies can raid their near-limitless back-catalogues. But they also aren't wooing punters to concerts.

So is this a tale of big bad multinationals exploiting, and then discarding, poor defenceless per-

Claudio Abbado's court case highlights the diminished status of the modern maestro, says Richard Morrison

formers? Well, no. Present-day conductors, Abbado included, should have seen this coming years ago. After all, they are paid handsomely to display "the vision thing". But they were complacent or, worse, complacent. Perhaps they were reluctant to jeopardise their precious "relationships" with the record companies that they supposed would support them for life. Only now has it dawned on them that they and their orchestras are heading for redundancy early in the 21st century.

There is another, perhaps more insulting, point. If today's top conductors had a tenth of the charisma of their great forerunners, none of this might have happened. If a Klemperer or a Toscanini were around now, people might actually be interested in buying new orchestral recordings. As it is, there is only one truly charismatic conductor in the world today: the eccentric, reclusive, petulant, unpredictable, monstrously demanding and astronomically well-paid Carlos Kleiber. And since he makes few records, abhors publicity and limits his concert appearances as ruthlessly as his repertoire, he is hardly the man to lead a populist revival of the classical music business.

The shortcomings of the present generation are cruelly exposed this month by EMI's seven-CD collection, *The Art of Conducting*. True, it is yet another compilation, but a distinctly upmarket one: a chronicle of great conducting, from a spluttering 1914 recording of Arthur Nikisch to Bernstein and Karajan in the 1970s.

Here is Stokowski blasting Bach

into the diesel age; Barbirolli coaxing unsurpassable eloquence in Elgar; Szell whipping his Cleveland players through Dvořák; Strauss grappling to steer something called the "Augmented London Tivoli Theatre Orchestra" towards an approximation of his *Rosenkavalier* suite. Here is Furtwängler wringing tragedy from the final wisps of Schubert's *Unfin-*

Admittedly, ours is an anti-authoritarian age. Though many top conductors of the 1930s made honourable stands against one Great Dictator or another, they were not averse to using heavy-handed methods in their own rehearsals. The unquestioning obedience demanded by a Szell or a Reiner would simply not be granted now. Many of today's younger conductors try to be nice to orchestras, and you can hear the results in their milkop music-making.

But there are other reasons for the diminished status of the modern conductor. In opera houses, even senior conductors (with the exceptions of Levine at the Met, Muti at La Scala and Gerd Schuster at the Kirov) now play second fiddle to the stage director — if not third or fourth fiddle behind the designer and lighting director as well. Musical values are mocked by wacky stage concepts, and conductors don't seem to object.

Then there's the "modern music" problem. Of the 16 conductors on the EMI collection, two (Bernstein and Strauss) were distinguished composers themselves, and most of the others had close connections with living composers (Toscanini with Puccini, Beecham with Delius, Weingartner with Brahms, Nikisch with Tchaikovsky, and so on). They were attuned to what their contemporaries were creating.

Few of today's top-league conductors (Rattle is a shining exception) are committed to championing the new; many loathe the new scores they foist on the public. So at the very top of the music profession, the crucial relation-

Few conductors today have a tenth of the charisma of their forerunners

ship between composition and interpretation has become hopelessly dysfunctional. If Abbado and his colleagues are wise, they will now urgently redefine the task of "being a conductor". To the wider public, symphony orchestras are remote objects: 19th-century inventions playing mostly 19th-century music in 19th-century clothes. Decades of complacency have turned classical music appreciation into the preserve of an ageing middle-class coterie.

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Many orchestras in Britain and America have realised this, and have made "music education" — in the broadest sense — a priority. Some conductors, notably Rattle in Birmingham and Leonard Slatkin in Washington, have been commendably supportive of this vital work. But others seem too obsessed with their own status in the hierarchy to notice that the whole business is heading for the rocks.

The giants of earlier generations would never have fallen into that trap. Bernstein, Toscanini, Klemperer: these were men who had a powerful vision of how the world should be, as well as how the tunes should sound. But talk to the present bunch and you rarely sense any burning desire to spread the good news about classical music.

Well, they must change or die. Nobody wants their recordings any more; their concert attendances are dwindling; they are not on the same wavelength as the best living composers; they have been deprived of power in opera houses; their interpretations, by and large, don't excite us; and they haven't got the imagination to see a way out of the present malaise. What's the point of them?

At home in the light and dark

LSO/Gatti
Barbican

SUNDAY brought one of the most evenly balanced concerts of the London Symphony Orchestra's Bruckner-Mozart Series. In some of the previous programmes one composer had fared better than the other, but here Daniele Gatti, enjoying perhaps a last fling with the LSO before becoming music director of the Royal Philharmonic in September, proved himself equally at home in both areas.

The concert opened with dark, almost Romantic Mozart: his *Adagio* and *Fugue* in C minor for Strings, in which tension pulsed from the first bar. Gatti built dense textures and moulded every phrase before unleashing a closely argued fugue of tumultuous energy.

The contrast provided by the sunny charm of Mozart's earlier *Concerto for Flute and Harp* could not have been greater. Gatti, a natural Mozartian, seemed to take delight in the fantasy of this music, but he maintained a disciplined accompaniment to the soloists. Paul Edmund-Davies, the LSO's principal flau-

tist, played with full, shiny timbre, in delicate contrast to the shimmering waves of sound Bryn Lewis obtained from his harp.

Gatti chose the original version of Bruckner's First Symphony, and revelled in its rough edges. Conducting from memory, he welded all the opening movement's strands together. He wielded a fluid baton that was well suited to the serene flow of the *Adagio*. It was unashamedly emotional, but refined orchestral playing kept the music in check.

Quiet was shattered by the fierce Scherzo, in which the lightly scored Trio is the only respite. The strings' disciplined attack here led naturally into a blazing *Finale* which is the only one in Bruckner's output to begin *fortissimo*. Moments of pastoral repose apart, Gatti never allowed the volume to drop.

JOHN ALLISON

Into the Outback

Hallé/Nagano
Free Trade Hall,
Manchester

CHRISTIAN LINDBERG should have had a crash helmet. At the speed he was going in Jan Sandström's *Motorbike Concerto* a trombone mute is of little use — as he found when he went into a spin in the final bars. In a way, though, it's a satisfactory, even cathartic ending: one would not want any harm to come to the obliging trombone soloist but the biker he represents in his scruffy red leathers, roaring around the Everglades.

Provence's mountains and the Australian outback, deserves all he gets. The *Motorbike Concerto* may not be great music but it is a great vehicle for Lindberg, who clearly enjoys doing impressions as much as he enjoys playing a sentimental vibrato-laden melody. The rising glissando of the accelerating engine and the fall in pitch of the gear change, the grumbling of the diggerdoo, the charming chorus of Disneyland crocodiles were authentically rendered. He does all this, moreover, with such unembarrassed conviction that even an accident, such as the slide falling off his trombone, could be taken as just another

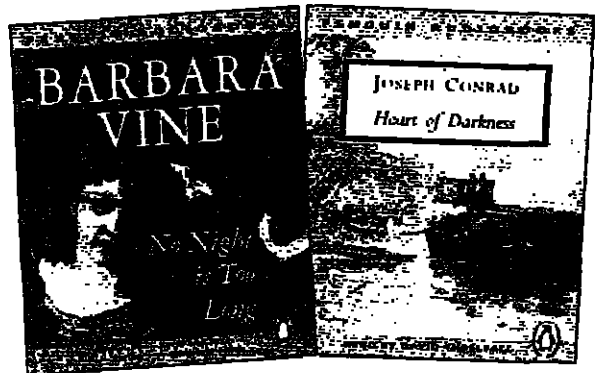
eccentricity, as theatre or even as high art.

The problem is that he can convince only those who are there to see him. The empty seats in the Free Trade Hall represented significant scepticism in the Hallé audience. Not even Dvořák and Sibelius could persuade the people to take a risk with Sandström: a pity because they would have enjoyed the mellifluous performance of Dvořák's wind Serenade in D minor and Kent Nagano's passionate interpretation of Sibelius's First Symphony.

Nagano has sometimes seemed to be determined to refine away the traditional Hallé sound. In this case, in the Sibelius, he allowed it to restore itself. It was encouraging to hear that the characteristic robustness and sincerity are still there when required.

GERALD LARNER

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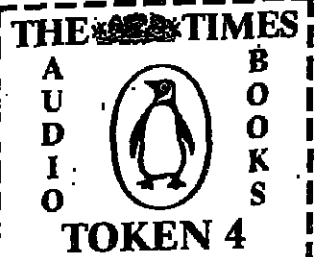
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Joke with no punchline

Asked for his reasons for touring Europe with a New Orleans-type jazz band, Woody Allen placed a great deal of emphasis on "fun". He stressed his status as keen amateur and even craved audiences' indulgence: "Please, folks, I'm a filmmaker, don't judge me too harshly." The jazz world, on the other hand, responded with its customary sardonic defensiveness, circulating the joke about two musicians discussing Allen's playing. One says: "Have you heard him play the clarinet?" Reply: "Yeah — the only time he ever made me laugh."

Such prickly, graceless resentment would have found few reasons to mellow in Allen's London concert, the last date in what has reportedly been a triumphant month-long progress through Europe. A capacity audience, composed — as they were later

Woody Allen
Festival Hall

only too eager to demonstrate — almost exclusively of clappers on 1 and 3, had assembled with the sole aim of enjoying themselves. They greeted each short piece characteristically with a storm of applause, and joined the band's various vocalists in old favourites such as *Down by the Riverside* and — somewhat bizarrely — *We'll Meet Again*.

Allen's clarinet playing is described by the star himself as "sub-mediocre". Like that of the genre's most celebrated reedsman, Sidney Bechet, it relies heavily on vibrato, but there the resemblance ends. Where Bechet was all quicksil-

ver grace and agility, Allen is logical and sensible, picking his way through solos with all the fussy care of a walker fording a dangerous stream. His tone, too, lacks body and warmth, so the gloriously uncomplicated exuberance that should characterise this collectively improvised music was largely lacking from his contributions.

The other band members eclipsed him, turning in performances that reflected their professional status and injecting life into old warhorses such as the comic *I'll Be Glad When You're Dead, You Rascal You* and the downright offensive *When Rastus Plays His Old Kазoo*. As for Allen himself, while he is undoubtedly a better clarinetist than Naomi Campbell is a novelist, he would be well advised not to give up his day job.

CHRIS PARKER

Doing their surreal thing

FORMED in 1984, the Flaming Lips passed through a series of small-time indie labels before settling with Warner Bros at the height of America's grunge explosion. But despite major label backing, this Oklahoma quartet seem to have deliberately distanced themselves from what is fashionable, and remain too eccentric to be bracketed into one particular genre.

The title of their latest album, *Clouds Taste Metallic*, hints at the surreal nature of their music. This is underlined by the album's opening track, *The Abandoned Hospital Ship*, which they played early in their set, featuring Wayne Coyne singing a slow, virtually unaccompanied vo-

The Flaming Lips
ULU, WC2

cal before taking off into a hail of distorted guitars and heavy drum beats.

Though the Flaming Lips look like an average lineup of two guitars, bass and drums, what makes them different is the way they use their instruments. Coyne played lead guitar, while fellow guitarist Ronald Jones offset him with feedback and Michael Ivins added loping bass lines. The real revelation was the drummer, Steven Drozd, who jug-

gled between his drum kit and a set of keyboards, while the band switched from quiet ballads to full-blown instrumentals and back again during a single song.

Their subject-matter, with titles like *Lightning Strikes The Postman* and *She Don't Use Jelly*, demonstrated their ability to combine noise, melody and off-the-wall lyrics.

The Flaming Lips finished with a one-song encore of Louis Armstrong's *What A Wonderful World*. It began quietly, with Coyne croaking the beautiful lyrics, then turned into a garage classic. The perfect ending to a noisy, unconventional set.

ANN SCANLON

Welsh National Opera would like to thank Amoco for supporting yet another **SOLD OUT** London Season.



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FESTIVALS

The Maly Drama Theatre of St Petersburg helps Brighton to celebrate all things Russian



FESTIVALS

... while at Aldeburgh, they have the German composer Hans Werner Henze in residence in June

THE TIMES ARTS



FESTIVALS

A premiere from John Tavener graces the Greenwich and Docklands event in London



FESTIVALS

... and Sally Burgess joins the new jazz bonanza at the impressive Harrogate Festival in July and August

Kate Bassett's guide to the best in singing, dancing, acting, telling jokes and playing music throughout the land

The festivals of summer '96 – and more

MARCH

Birmingham: More Towards the Millennium. Each spring, until the year 2000, Birmingham has celebrated a decade of the 20th century. This year it is the turn of the Fifties. Sir Simon Rattle conducts Bernstein alongside a rock'n'roll weekend. Birmingham Rep stages Osborne's *The Entertainer*. Also films and architectural trails. Until April 28 (0121-236 2992)

Burns Festival, London: The tenth festival of lesbian and gay film on the South Bank. Until April 4 (0171-9281828)

London Handel Festival: Make merry with George Frederick Handel and his contemporaries, mainly in St George's, Hanover Square. Mar 26-Apr 30 (0181-336 0990)

Visual Arts in the North: Under the banner of Visual Arts UK (part of the Arts Council's millennium project), the counties of northern England present a broad sweep of exhibitions and some festivals. These include Stockton's International Riverside Festival emphasising visual theatre (Aug 1-4, 01642 61625) and the Newcastle International Festival of Theatre at the Playhouse (Sept 30-Oct 31, 0191 230 5151) which merges with this year's International Workshop Festival (Sept 28-Oct 6, 0191 2614780) with classes led by international figures concentrating on site-specific work. V.A.I.N. to Nov 17 (0191 2211996)

APRIL

Spichester Theatre: A strong lineup for the start of the festival season. Big names: Alan Bates, Derek Jacobi, Dawn French. The plays include a British premiere of Turgenev's *Fortune's Fool*, and *Mansfield Park*, staged by Michael Rudman. In the Minerva: premieres from Simon Gray, Ronald Harwood and Alan Ayckbourn. Maggie Smith in *Talk of the Town*, directed by Alan Bennett. Harriet Walter in *Hedda Gabler*. Frances Barber in *Uncle Vanya*. April 25-Oct 19 (01243 781312)

It's Queer Up North: A celebration of gay culture, based in Manchester. Apr 26-May 19 (0161 236 4723)

MAY

Aria, Essex: A month of opera round the county. Other Essex festivals include Cressing with opera and drama in the ancient barn-temple (July 18-28, 01376 584903) and Thaxted with concerts in the spired church (June 21-July 14, 01371 831421). Aria: May 25-June 15 (01245 495028)

Bath: Music, mostly classical, in beautiful Bath. This year's theme is Migrations. Harmonies from gospel to gypsy with Roger Vignoles in residence. Jazz is refocused into the Bank Holiday weekend. Walks, talks, modern art in public places. May 17-June 2 (01225 462231)

Beverley: The medieval town with the Gothic Minster embraces early music. The Tallis Scholars, London Baroque et al. May 9-12 (01482 883898)

Birmingham Readers and Writers: Literary events involving the likes of Spike Milligan, and storytelling on a canal boat. May 10-18 (0121-235 4244)

BOC Covent Garden: An expanding festival of opera and musical theatre in intriguing venues. Judith Howarth and Elizabeth Vidal vie in *The Impresario* at the Freemasons' Hall. The Ambassadors Theatre offers the off-Broadway hit *Dames at Sea*. May 27-June 8 (0181-544 0808)

Bournemouth: International mirth in May with baroque music, rock and jazz bashes, dance (Adventures in Motion Pictures) and drama (The Wrestling School). The theme – "From the Sublime to the Ridiculous" – includes Prunella Scales and Timothy West singing with the Bournemouth Sinfonietta. May 11-26 (01202 297327)

Brighton: A big mixed-arts celebration by the sea. The focus, alongside centenary cinema, is on Russia. The Royal Pavilion hosts recitals. Glyndebourne offers Alfred Brendel in the afternoon. Plenty of literary readings to plug any gaps. May 4-26 (01273 713842)

Bury St Edmunds: Now held in the spring, this festival unrolls in the cathedral, the Georgian Theatre Royal and around the medieval market town. Orchestras, gospel choirs, comedy, film, a children's day, Jools Holland, a display of pyrotechnics. May 9-25 (01284 757099)

Cardiff Bay Jazz: Jazz round the bay, with free gigs in pubs and concerts in the tiny Norwegian church. May 25-27 (01222 340591)

Chelmsford Cathedral: Concerts take over the cathedral. Soloists include Julian Lloyd Webber. Jazz concerts in the marquee and star lectures on the fringe. May 15-25 (0124535990)

English Haydn, Bridgnorth: Haydn hits Shropshire. Concerts in St Leonard's Church in the quaint market town where Cromwell blew up the castle. Victoria de los Angeles sings on Gala Night. May 31-June 9 (01746 766194)

Glasgow Mayfest: A big Clydebank celebration of the arts. Drama: The Citizen's revives the sell-out *Swing Hammer Swing*, from Jeff Torrington's Whitbread-winning novel about the Gorbals. Concerts: a hundred electric guitars in one fell swoop and a Craig Armstrong premiere. Movies: *Braveheart*, drive-in style. May 2-25 (01455 528000)

Glyndebourne: New productions of Handel's *Theodora* (directed by Peter Sellars) and *Berg's Lulu* (directed by Graham Vick). Revivals of *Ermione*, *Yevgeny Orphee*, *Arabella* and Trevor Nunn's



Prunella Scales: bound to sing in Bournemouth

Costi: Don't forget the picnic. Tickets from £10 to £110. May 17-Aug 25 (01273813813)

Greenwich and Docklands International, London: A classy all-arts festival, now spanning the Thames. There is a new concert stage in the Royal Park and a premiere from composer John Tavener. The Waterfront Cities project imports artists from Chicago. May 24-June 2 (0181-305 1818)

Hay: Bookworms go haywire. A mighty literary bash in the Black Mountains market town. May 24-June 2 (01497 821217)

India's South, London: A notable festival of southern Indian culture. On the South Bank, films, music and poster artists painting giant hoardings. Art at the British Museum. At Riverside, stylised and spectacular theatre and dance. May 23-June (0171-354 4141)

Leeds Music: A festival of talent with lots of jazz. May 3-12 (0113 2432491)

Malvern: Elgar is feted amid his beloved Malvern Hills. Pianist David Owen Norris offers a UK premiere of Elgar's *Five Improvisations* from 1929. May 27-June 9 (01684 572725)

Newbury: An all-rounder. Russian dancers. Stan Tracey's jazz interpretation of *Under Milk Wood*, open artists' studios. May 4-18 (01635 32421)

Salisbury: A fine arts fest



Jimmy McRae pipes a golden anniversary tune for this August's Edinburgh Festival, the world's greatest annual celebration of the arts

combining the popular and unexpected in the serene city. Cathedral concerts. A Michael Nyman premiere inspired by football's Euro '96. Street acts, performing poets, site-specific installations. May 25-June 8 (01722 323883)

Sheffield: Chamber music, especially Beethoven and his contemporaries, at the Crucible Theatre. May 11-25 (0114 2769922)

Turning World: A concentration of international contemporary dance in London, at The Place and the South Bank. May-June (0171-387 0031)

Aldeburgh: This renowned festival has German composer Hans Werner Henze in residence and a world premiere from Finnish wunderkind Magnus Lindberg. World-class musicians bring you Beethoven, Britten et al. June 7-23 (01228 452935)

Barclays New Stages, London and Birmingham: The Royal Court Theatre is taken over by adventurous alternative performances: Ken Campbell, CandoCo, "Stephen Daldry's Body Show". The mind boggles. In Birmingham, Motionhouse and Stan's Café. June 10-July 6 (0171-730 1745)

Bradford: Multi-ethnic jamboree. Mela, the Asian fair of arts and food, is free fun. There is also BAF (01274 820666). Bradford's festival of animated film. June 28-July 13 (01274 309199)

Chelsea, London: Fashion displays, tea dances, classical concerts, jazz in Sloane Square, a literary salon featuring the work of famous locals. June 2-8 (0171-824 8219)

Chichester Festivities: The Georgian city's arts bonanza offers pianists Peter Frankl and Tamas Vasary in tandem, sculpture in the cathedral precincts, celebrity lectures, concerts in Goodwood House, stand-up and sea shanties. June 30-July 16 (01243 785718)

City of London: A flowering of the arts in the square mile: music, dance and poetry in striking spots. In the Guildhall, Smetana's *Ma Vlast* with period instruments and Roger Norrington. Teatr Biuro Podroz, award-winning Poles on stilts, torch their set in Paternoster Square. June 25-July 14 (0171-377 0540)

Garsington: Operas al fresco at the Jacobean manor. Productions of Mozart's *Idomeneo*, Garsington's first opera seria (staged by David Fielding, with Jon Garrison and Jean Rigby); Rossini's *Il Turco in Italia* (directed by Stefano Vizzoli); and Britten's comic *Albert Herring* (direct-

ed by Stephen Unwin). You can picnic in the gardens, or dinner is served in the Great Barn. Tickets £70-£90. June 20-July 14 (01365 361636)

Gwynedd: Classical music in a mock-Tudor mansion in Wales. June 21-30 (01686 625007)

Ludlow: This year's all-fresco Shakespeare in the Castle is *King Lear* (without, let us hope, appropriate weather). Plenty of classical and pop concerts, dance, drama, literary events, and walks around the lovely Shropshire town. June 22-July 7 (01584 872150)

Luthians Baroque Music, London: 17th and 18th-century music in Wren's St James's Church on Piccadilly. Renowned artists, period instruments, and Lampe's lampoon opera, *The Dragon of Wantley*. May 30-June 28 (0171-228 6388)

Out of Life: The biennial London International Festival of Theatre is in its interim year. A short season focuses on young people's theatre. June 14-23 (0171-490 3964)

Peterborough Cathedral: Concerts in the Norman edifice. Jazz in the cloisters. Elsewhere, heaps of Hispanic culture. June 21-July 2 (01733 343342)

Pride, London: The capital's celebration of gay and lesbian creativity across the spectrum. June 1-July 6 (0171-924 0325)



Peter Maxwell Davies: Orkney debut for new work

St Magnus: Delights on the Orkney islands. Sir Peter Maxwell Davies conducts his new symphony. The resident poet is Iain Crichton Smith. Folk, jazz and a friendly festival club. June 21-26 (01856 872669)

Spitalfields, London: Christ Church, acoustically terrific and stunningly designed by Hawksmoor, hosts classical and contemporary concerts in the East End. The festival celebrates its twentieth birthday with Bach, Gibbons and Huguenot composers. June 5-26 (0171-377 0287)

Stour: Baroque and Renaissance music in the Pilgrim Church at Broughton Aluph. Kent. Evelyn Tubb and others. June 21-30 (01233 812740)

Warwick and Leamington: Fireworks, concerts and stagings of *Richard III* and *Henry V* at Warwick Castle. Choirs and orchestras in antique buildings. Intriguingly twinned with the South Bohemia Music Festival. June 29-July 13 (01926 410747)

York Mystery Plays: Every four years the medieval Corpus Christi plays live again. Sadly, no stages-on-wheels to be seen squeezing through the Shambles, but a hundred locals perform the cycle (adapted by Liz Lochhead) at the Theatre Royal, directed by John Doyle. Solicitor Rory Mulvihill is the first amateur Messiah since 1969, while, somewhat controversially, God is a woman – shopkeeper Ruth Ford. June 4-30 (01904 658162)

Ascot Jazz: A first. Hampers, champers and big concerts at the racecourse: Jools Holland, Alan Price, Courtney Pine. July 11-13 (01344 876456)

BBC Henry Wood Promenade Concerts: The humungously famous Proms will, of course, be packing them in at the Albert Hall. Nicholas Kenyon is the new director. Semi-staged operas and a close look at concertos. Bruckner and Spanish themes. The *Proms Guide* is published in May. July 19-Sept 16 (0191 222 0381)

Birmingham Jazz: The city gets hopping to jazz. 90 per cent of it for free. July 5-14 (0121-454 7020)

Buxton: This Peak District spa town boasts a Frank Matcham opera house. This year, the music of 18th-century London: Handel's *Amadigi* and Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*. Also quartets, Festival Mass, young artists and cabaret. July 12-28 (01298 70395)

Cambridge: The much-loved Folk Festival (July 26-28). The commendable Film Festival (July 11-28). Also pop in the parks, fine summer recitals, new writing and contemporary music. July-Aug (01223 463363)

Cheltenham Music: An admired international festival of music, old and new, in the Regency town. Director Michael Berkeley turns his attention to Russia. Also a new opera from John Woolrich. Fringe jazz and film to boot. July 6-21 (01242 521621)

Chester: Summer music in the walled city. Open-air concerts include *Music from the Mov-*

ies in Grosvenor Park. You can toddle between lunchtime concerts and talks. Lesley Garrett, Thomas Allen and others. July 12-27 (01244 320700)

Dartington Summer School: Internationally renowned music-making, for pros and amateurs, on the peaceful estate of Dartington Hall. Masterclasses and workshops with organist David Titterton and many more. Courses on everything from John Cage's *Europeans* to West African drumming. For audiences, concerts and classes are open-door. July 6-Aug 24 (01803 865988)

Deal: Chamber music in coastal Kent with Jill Gomez, the Britten Sinfonia etc. July 27-Aug 10 (01304 369576)

Exeter: Candlelit concerts and jazz in the cathedral and Powderham Castle. This year is strong on music from Italy. Manchester Camarata play *The Four Seasons* during a dramatisation of Vivaldi's life. Watch out for the Natural Theatre Company behaving oddly round town. July 4-21 (01392 265300)

Fishguard: Choirs and classical musicians, with a Welsh slant, fall into your lap in Fishguard and St David's Cathedral a few miles away. For ramblers, the coastal path is hard-by. July 20-27 (01348 873612)

Harrogate: The impressive all-round arts fest in Harrogate boasts international orchestras. Sally Burgess and Julian Joseph join the new jazz bonanza. Also dance, street performers and Laifs at the Baths. July 26-Aug 10 (01423 562303)

Henley: Fine evenings on the banks of the Thames in the wake of the regatta. Wayne and Melanie Marshall bring Gershwin to the floating stage, dinner is served. George Melly is in the marquee. July 10-13 (01491 411353)

King's Lynn: Merriment takes hold of East Anglia's old port: theatre, dance, film, concerts, comedy. Favourite events include the Literary Lunch and Festival Fireworks. July 20-Aug 3 (01553 773578)

Lichfield: This international arts festival celebrates its fifteenth birthday with arts of all sorts and pyrotechnics by the cathedral. Benjamin Britten, who died 20 years ago, is remembered. July 5-14 (01543 257298)

Llangollen Eisteddfod: Famous feast of song and dance in north Wales, lasting a very full six days. Choirs from around the world are in competition. Folk dancers abound in national costume. Guest artists are the calibre of Bryn Terfel

and James Galway. July 9-14 (01978 860236)

Womad: World music, arts and crafts and food on the banks of the Thames as it wanders through Reading. July 19-21 (01225 743188)

York Early Music: Britain's biggest festival of early music in delightful medieval churches and historic homes. Everything from consorts of viols to Tibetan monks' ritual fire chants. Lectures, walks, talks and convivial meetings over coffee. July 5-14 (01904 658338)

Jools Holland is bringing jazz to Ascot racecourse

York Early Music: Britain's biggest festival of early music in delightful medieval churches and historic homes. Everything from consorts of viols to Tibetan monks' ritual fire chants. Lectures, walks, talks and convivial meetings over coffee. July 5-14 (01904 658338)

Arundel: In the castle grounds, the open-air Shakespeare is *Hamlet* (Oxford Stage Company). There is a marked input from America (sponsorship from Texas Instruments). Concerts in the cathedral. Jazz, folk, plays and talks in the castle marquee. Artists reveal their studios. Aug 23-Sept 1 (01903 883690)

Brecon Jazz: Go wild in a Welsh market town and see the Beacons. Aug 9-11 (01874 625557)

Edinburgh International: The most famous arts fest in the universe hits its half-century. The vast Fringe festival (Aug 11-31, 0131-2265257) is awash with theatre and stand-up, joined by the jazz and blues fest (Aug 4-12, 0131-5571642). Meanwhile the prestigious International Festival presents outstanding concerts, drama, dance and opera. International Festival Aug 11-31 (0131-226 4001)

Edinburgh Film: Coinciding with the international arts fest, the Drambuie Edinburgh Film Festival brings its showcase of British and innovative world movies, the best-ever documentaries, and films which changed the world. Aug 11-25 (0131-228 4051)

Lake District Summer Music: A summer school and concert season around Lake Windermere. Open to the public are morning recitals, masterclasses and nightly concerts. Aug 3-11 (01539 733411)

Notting Hill: London's megacarnival celebrating black culture. Spectacular costumes. Unbelievable crowds. Aug 25-26 (0181-964 0544)

Worcester, Three Choirs: Europe's oldest mobile choral festival circles back to Worcester and concentrates on Elgar. Also Berlioz's newly discovered *Messe Solennelle* and contemporary works. Aug 17-24 (01905 616211)

SEPTEMBER

Jersey: Shifting to the autumn, Jersey's second international arts fest ranges from opera to avant-garde theatre, besides classical and world music. Sept 21-Oct 6 (01534 68080)

North Wales, St Asaph: Music from the Hallé Orchestra and others celebrating the twenty-fifth festival in this tiny, acoustically splendid cathedral. Sept 14-21 (01745 554508)

Windsor: Evelyn Glennie and other virtuosos at Windsor Castle and Eton College. Sept 22-Oct 5 (01753 623400)

OCTOBER

Canterbury: A clutch of Cathedral concerts, dance, drama and opera. In the festival club, jazz, folk and comedy. About town, walks, talks, movies and masterclasses. Oct 12-26 (01227 452853)

Cheltenham Literature: A mighty fest of top writers, with a particular focus on women this year. Oct 11-20 (01242 521631)

Dance Umbrella, London: Contemporary international dancers congregate in London at The Place and elsewhere. Oct 7-Nov 2 (0181-741 4040)

Norfolk and Norwich: The 900-year-old cathedral and other vintage buildings welcome orchestras, ensembles and fine soloists. On the wackier end, two platform concerts of train-inspired music at Liverpool Street and Norwich Station. Oct 10-20 (01603 764764)

Now '96: Nottingham showcases experimental performances. Oct 19-Nov 19 (0115 948 3500)

Visionsfest, Liverpool: Merseyside's focus on innovative visual art and design, pavement sculptures, installations, video, architecture. Throughout Oct (0151 708 9887)

VISIONS '96: International animated theatre: puppetry, film, interactive exhibitions. Based at the University of Brighton but touring beyond. Oct 23-Nov 3 (01273 643024)

● A guide to European festivals will appear next Wednesday

Royal Festival Hall RPH 1 Sunday 24 March at 7.30pm
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FAVRE: *Pavane*, BIZET: *Suite No 1 Carmen*, FUCHSI: *Lullaby*,
MORAN: *Lescaud*, O mio babbino caro *Gianini Schicchi*,
MASSNET: *Adieu, notre petite table Manon*, CAVALERI: *Ebbene se*
andio lontano La Wally, LEHAR: *Overture Merry Widow*,
ON MY Lips *Guditha*, WALTZ: *Sequence Count of Luxembourg*,
HETTERICH: *Im Chiemsee Sépère Opéra Ball*, ROSSINI: *Lover*
come back to me & Softly as in a morning sunrise New Moon,
STRAUSS: *Pizzicato Polka*, THUNDER & LIGHTNING *Polka*,
NOVELLA: *We'll gather lilacs Perchance to Dream*,
BORODIN: *Wright/Lewis* And this is my beloved *Kismet*!
*Lesley Garrett 128, £25.50, £21.50, £16.50, £13.50, £10.50

Investors target Britain

Christopher Warman reports on increasing international interest in British commercial property

Evidence of growing activity in European cross-border property investment explains why the British property market was strongly represented at the seventh annual Mipim international property market, which took place last week in Cannes.

The scale of European activity is shown in a recent report by DTZ Debenham Thorpe, *Overseas Investment in UK Commercial Property 1995*. This indicates that direct foreign investment in UK commercial property amounted to £1.78 billion last year — and there is no indication that interest is declining.

This view is confirmed in Knight Franks' *European Property Market Review — Spring 1996*. German, Middle and Far Eastern investors have been especially active, taking advantage of strong capital values, purchasing power and a leasing system which is, by international standards, weighted in favour of landlords.

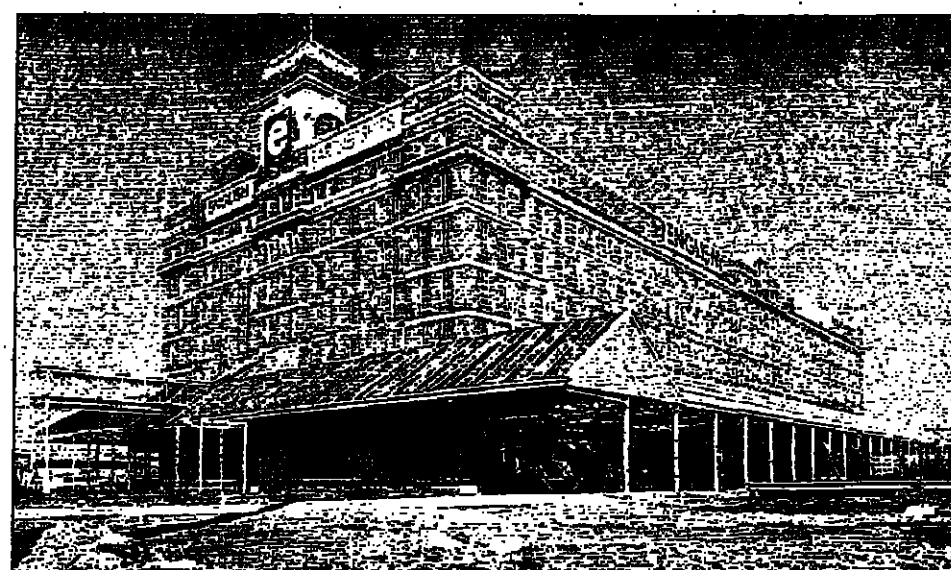
Identification of this trend enabled Mipim to attract property professionals, from

developers, agents and architects to development corporations and lawyers. More than 7,000 people from 55 countries attended, slightly up on last year. The UK had the highest number of companies — 134 — exhibiting their expertise.

But it was not only Europeans who attended the market. There was a growing Australian presence: for example, Chris Marks of Jones Lang Wootton Melbourne and the Victoria Government Office were there to promote Melbourne Docks.

The Bahamas, Bahrain, Cuba, Cyprus, India, Macao, the Republic of Estonia and the Republic of Latvia were exhibiting for the first time.

The significance of real estate management was acknowledged at Mipim through a conference, organised by the chartered accountants Ernst & Young, on the increasing importance of property in business. Traditionally, property has not been an issue of the highest importance for companies, and research by Ernst & Young confirms this, suggesting that for about 40 per cent of



Ford is moving a large part of its business to the Fort Dunlop site in Birmingham

organisations in Britain, France and Spain it is not a priority.

The importance of the workplace environment, too, came into focus from the architectural consultant DEGW, which has long acknowledged that design and workplace costs can have a direct impact on productivity. The company used Mipim to launch its international arm.

The presence of a large German contingent, including Bilfinger and Berger Projektentwicklung, did not go unnoticed by the British. Research

from DTZ Debenham Thorpe shows that the Germans dominated the flow of money into the commercial property market last year, with an investment of about £370 million, one fifth of all overseas purchases.

British representation included the Black Country Development Corporation, which was confident of the value of Mipim as an environment in which to attract investors, and was poised to secure a number of major investments.

Also at the market was the Isle of Wight Regeneration

aimed to highlight the success of its partnership with the regional bodies and investors. The objective of its stand was to attract more cross-border investment, similar to the previous deals concluded with Siemens, Samsung and Ford, which is moving a large part of its new investment in the Midlands to the massive Fort Dunlop site in Birmingham.

English Partnerships also used Mipim to launch the *England plc* directory, a comprehensive reference document on diverse English regions, targeted at the international investment market.

This was the first of a series of initiatives between English Partnerships and the regional agencies, and it could bring closer the creation of an English Development Agency.

Such an agency was proposed by the former President of the Board of Trade, Michael Heseltine, in 1993, but it was rejected as too interventionist.

Mipim's Man of the Year award went to Sir Norman Foster, chairman and founder of Sir Norman Foster and Partners (UK). Xavier Roy, chief executive of the Reed Midem organisation, said that Sir Norman had played a crucial role during the past 30 years in helping to redefine architectural values and in introducing new technology into his field.

Sales on the net

FIVE of the UK's leading firms of chartered surveyors are supporting a site on the Internet for the property industry, which will go live on March 30.

It is to be run by PropertyLink Commercial, which has been created by the mediatech supplier LRG Netmedia with the support of Chesterton, DTZ Debenham Thorpe, Hillier Parker, Jones Lang Wootton and Richard Ellis.

The site is open to any property owner or agent wishing to market a commercial property, at a basic cost of £100 a property. The scheme will be launched with a minimum of 1,000 commercial properties.

Jeff Worboys of Richard Ellis says the scheme is designed to avoid the fragmentation of information between Internet sites and is "a response to client demand, particularly the multinational organisations which wish to access the global market".

GREAT Portland Estates has completed its new office development at 160 Great Portland Street, London W1, the only new

development of its size in the West End. The 82,330 sq ft air-conditioned offices are on seven floors behind the retained Portland stone facade, and a central atrium extends the full height of the building.

Agents Hillier Parker are offering the building as a whole or floor by floor, and the annual rent is £25 million, or £30 a sq ft.

IN ONE of the biggest developments in Penzance, Cornwall, terms have been agreed with three main retailers on Charville Estates's new 60,000 sq ft Wharfside Shopping Centre. Littlewoods has taken 24,000 sq ft for its second store in Cornwall, and will be joined by Argos and another national retailer.

Alan Chick of Scott Burridge Chick, joint agent with Healey & Baker, says it is a boost for Penzance.

THE Mayfair, London, house where the Shelley lived is for sale freehold. The Grade II listed office building on six floors at 14 Half Moon Street is at present occupied by the advertising contractor Maiden Outdoor. The building, with a mix of period rooms and modern offices, is for sale, price not disclosed, through Cyril Leonard and Dunster & Morton.

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You must have a solid commercial or professional secretarial background and possess excellent audio skills (70 wpm min). Ability to work under pressure and to tight and changing deadlines essential. Wordperfect experience an advantage.

To apply please call 0171 306 3470 for an application form and further details

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This internationally recognised Medical School wishes to appoint an experienced executive Secretary to provide secretarial and administrative support to the office of the Dean.

To be considered for this appointment, you should hold a Bachelors Degree in Business Administration or equivalent and have at least four years experience of a senior secretarial role preferably gained in a medical or academic environment. This post is a varied and challenging one, which requires a confident individual who can communicate at any level and continually display a high degree of initiative when dealing with situations where there are no simple answers. In addition, you must be someone who can continually think ahead, produce quality self correspondence and balance a number of pressing priorities at the same time.

In return, the UAE University will offer a competitive tax free salary according to your qualifications and experience and a significant benefits package that includes rent free accommodation, furniture allowance, 45 days annual leave, annual return air ticket allowance and an end of service bonus.

Applications in the form of a comprehensive curriculum vitae (with details of your current remuneration) and the names and addresses of two professional referees should be forwarded to:

The Director of Personnel, Faculty of Medicine, UAE University, PO Box 17666, Al Ain, United Arab Emirates Fax No. +971 3 857648 e-mail Melvin@medic.uaeu.ac.ae

The closing date for applications is 15 April 1996

SECRETARY/ADMINISTRATOR
£20,000
This exciting role, within the international environment of a leading UK based company, offers an excellent opportunity for an intelligent, confident, motivated secretary with excellent communication skills. W4W, MS Office, 60wpm, 12 months exp. in a similar role. Excellent salary and benefits package. For details, please contact Hazel Brandon on 0171 403 1528
SEGAL RECRUITMENT

Board Directors' Secretary
We are an integrated design practice and require an experienced PA/Secretary for two board directors. Are you self motivated with excellent organisational and communication skills, used to working at senior level and enjoy working in a friendly office environment. Experience of Word 6 and Excel essential. Please send your CV to:
Imelda Skelly, Aukett Associates, 2 Great Eastern Wharf, Parkgate Road, London SW11 4NP or fax 0171 978 8725.
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If you are a talented secretary looking for a fresh challenge join one of our eight offices based in central London. Applicants need to be well presented, personable with excellent computer and admin skills. Must live in Central London. Salary up to £15,000 for the right person.
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Are you a high calibre PA/Secretary looking for a new direction? Head for Greenford in Middlesex where an inspiring opportunity awaits you in a rapidly expanding logistics company. Your main role will be to provide support to the Managing Director. You will have knowledge of Word for Windows, Excel and Powerpoint, although cross-training is available.
For more information on this exciting position please contact Jo Osbourne on 0181 741 1192.
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PR SECRETARY
£20,000
Large PR company requires experienced secretary with media background. Working for a demanding team of account execs, a sense of humour and ability to deal with pressure are a must. 60wpm essential.
Rusell Chambers, The Piazza, Covent Garden, London Tel: 0171 240 2833

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Based in corporate HQ this position is involving and varied. Ability to work you will need strong organisational skills plus the confidence to deal with individuals at all levels. Shorthand and WP essential for back up.
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£16,683 - £18,153 PA INC. L.W.

The National Child Protection Helpline is a 24 hour telephone service which receives referrals about children at risk. The administrative team is crucial to the smooth running of the service. As a senior member of the Administration Team, you will have experience of managing budgets, contacts and administrative services. A good background knowledge of computer packages such as Word 6.0 for Windows, Wordperfect 5.1, Excel 3.0, and E-mail is essential. You also need to have excellent communication skills both verbal and written with accurate typing (50wpm). A methodical, organised approach to work is vital, as well as being able to work without close supervision. ~Benefits include a non-contributory pension scheme, 25+2 days holiday and a handsome allowance of 60p per day. ~This post is suitable for jobshare. ~For an application form and further information please ring 0171 825 2785 and leave a message clearly stating your name and address quoting reference NC182. ~Closing date for completed application forms: 12 April 1996.

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Endless opportunities
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Tel: 0171 491 4645 ADIA ALFRED MARKS (REC CON)

Are you a high calibre PA/Secretary looking for a new direction? Head for Greenford in Middlesex where an inspiring opportunity awaits you in a rapidly expanding logistics company. Your main role will be to provide support to the Managing Director. You will have knowledge of Word for Windows, Excel and Powerpoint, although cross-training is available.
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£20,000
We have a number of exciting opportunities within the Banking arena, working at Director level and above. All are varied and involving roles where you can create your own niche and reap the superb financial rewards. These include: Paid overtime, housing allowance, Gym, IFSTL, Pension, Profit Related Pay, Subsidised Restaurant and Swimming Pool +...
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We have a number of contract, long and short term assignments for secretaries with a selection of Word Processing, graphics and spreadsheets packages.
For a confidential chat with one of our consultants regarding the above or other vacancies, please telephone GREYTHORN (0171) 831 9999.
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Secretary/PA

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The BMJ Publishing Group produces the BMJ, medical books and approximately 30 Specialist Journal titles and is one of the largest medical publishers in Europe.

The Executive Director is looking for an experienced Secretary/PA to provide a full secretarial service which will include audio/word processing, taking minutes of meetings, and dealing with correspondence.

Applicants should have fast, accurate audio/word processing skills (WordPerfect 6.1), excellent communication and interpersonal skills and the ability to work flexibly with the minimum of supervision.

Please apply in writing, enclosing CV, to:
Human Resources Department, BMA House, Tavistock Square, London WC1H 9JP.

We are unable to acknowledge all applications and only those selected for interview will be contacted.
Closing date: 29 March 1996



ROYAL COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNAECOLOGISTS

TWO SENIOR SECRETARIAL VACANCIES - £15,325 + Benefits

The College is a membership organisation responsible for standards within the medical speciality of obstetrics and gynaecology. The College conducts examinations, approved training programmes and organises postgraduate meetings.

We need an experienced secretary to work for the Head of the Examination Department. The duties will include transcription of audio and shorthand, so quality word processing is required. The person appointed will also be involved in considerable administrative work in helping to assess the eligibility of candidates who wish to sit the Membership examination of the College. Attention to detail is extremely important.

(Ref EX1)

Our Postgraduate Training Department wishes to recruit an experienced Committee secretary. This interesting post involves the approval of hospital appointments for junior doctors training for the College Membership examination. Quality word processing and audio skills are required plus computer database experience would be an advantage.

(Ref PGT1)

For details and an application form quoting the appropriate reference, please telephone Mrs Kim Dawson on 0171 262 5425

West End Company
Requires PA/Sec with good all round skills. Must have initiative and experience
Salary circa £14-15K
Write with CV to Macmillan House, 43 Portland Place, London W1N 4LN

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Contact Sue on 0171 498 6248

FORTIES PEOPLE
have superb jobs for secretaries (from £14K) with/without shorthand. Receptionists from £15K, basic keyboarding.
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Prestigious UK City Bank requires a first class secretary to work in their Chairman's office. Working as an integral part of a team of three you will be utilising your already strong skills in this varied role. This will include dealing directly with the Chairman and VPs, managing the diary and co-ordinating business and social events. This is an ideal opportunity to gain senior level experience at a young age. Skills: 80/60. Age 22-27. Please call Kate Hodson on 0171-390 7000.

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Small, successful investment company based in Mayfair needs someone special to join their friendly team. This new position is a unique opportunity for someone who enjoys an independent role in a busy environment. Working for three young executives, you will be juggling diaries, collecting presentations and constantly liaising with clients worldwide. In return for your enthusiastic, flexible manner and excellent interpersonal skills you will enjoy fabulous surroundings, superb free lunches and a weekend in Europe if you are aged 22-28 with fast typing (60+) please call Sonia Nair on 0171-494 4512.

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Corporate Finance Team Secretaries £25,000+

Stylish, thriving West End financial institution has several vacancies for outstanding secretaries to support dynamic teams in client driven areas. These jobs call for those who have real energy, enthusiasm and drive. You will be expected to use your judgement to prioritise, be confident working on your own initiative to meet demanding deadlines. Being a perfectionist you will be keen to produce work of only the highest quality to be recognised as a key team member. Corporate Finance experience is essential as are good typing and WP skills. Age 23 - 30. Please call Karen Levine on 0171-390 7000.

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Use your excellent communication and organisational skills working for the senior director of this fast-moving and growing international leisure company. This is a busy, varied and interesting role so you must have an energetic and professional approach to work as you will be arranging hectic travel schedules and diaries. If you enjoy working in a friendly environment with lots of different nationalities and characters, have good secretarial skills and are aged 25-35 then call Fiona Mackay on 0171-434 4512.

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SECRETARY TO HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS

The Royal British Legion is the leading charity dedicated to the welfare of the ex-service community. We are seeking an experienced Secretary for the Head of Communications, principally to provide a full secretarial service for the Head of Department, but also to be the communications secretary and organiser, dealing with all correspondence, internal and external, to develop and maintain filing and record systems, co-ordinate and manage diaries, and undertake other duties associated with communications and PR, i.e. dealing with enquiries from the media, suppliers, printers etc.

The post calls for a capable Secretary with good organisational and communication skills, with 90 WPM shorthand or audio, and WP skills including spreadsheets, who has tact and diplomacy, and is able to mix at all levels. Stamina, enthusiasm and a good sense of humour are essential.

Applications should be sent to The Personnel Assistant (CS), The Royal British Legion, 48 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5JY, by 5 April 1996

career moves

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Messies of commitment and a strong set b/ground in either TV production or an affiliated field will see you in a strong position to get totally involved in this role as Sec to the Deputy Commissioning Editor of Factual Programmes at this major TV player. You will be constantly liaising with production co's setting up meetings, logging scripts and doing bits of research. A superb opportunity for someone with 2/3 years' exp.

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Short flexible courses in keyboarding and
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Please send application and CV for: PO Box No 4520

TRADING FLOOR PERSONNEL

£22,000 + Benefits

This exciting and expanding global organisation is looking for an experienced Executive Secretary to work for a dynamic and energetic American Director. You will be totally involved in the business of the company including the preparation of presentations and reports and arranging conferences abroad. This is an excellent opportunity to use your own initiative and ideas to help establish this new division. Along with excellent secretarial skills you will need a good knowledge of MS Office and a European language. Please contact the West End Division on

Angela Mortimer
0171-287 7788

Angela Mortimer is an equal opportunities employer.
All applicants are positively welcomed.

TRADING FLOOR PERSONNEL

£16,500 + Benefits

This large well-known centrally based Newspaper group is looking for an intelligent, experienced secretary to work for a Senior Editor. Based in prestigious offices, you will be involved in research, handling enquiries from writers and members of the public, along with co-ordinating and administering a busy creative team. You will need to have a minimum of one year's secretarial experience and be interested in the media. Please contact the West End Division on

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£24,000 Package

Our client, a market leading International Merchant bank, requires a strong and capable PA who can cope with the pressures of a fast-paced and exciting environment. Answerable to the Head of the Division who specialises in Far Eastern markets, a considerable proportion of your time will be spent dealing with his complex travel itineraries. Your secretarial and co-ordination skills will also allow you to co-ordinate the activities of a team of five or a corporate desk. Your communication skills mean that you quickly establish a rapport with both your colleagues and clients. Organisational flair is crucial, enabling you to streamline administrative procedures and practice a demanding workload. 80 wpm sth, 60 wpm typing and advanced computer literacy are essential. Please call now on

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This international plc is looking for a secretary with secretarial/personnel experience. You will have sole responsibility for placing temporary and permanent flow secretaries on a weekly basis, as well as supporting the Recruitment Officer in other recruitment projects. You will also be expected to build an in-depth understanding of each department's requirements and the personalities involved. In order to meet the exceptional standards demanded by the job you will need to be highly organised, astute and a good problem solver who also retains warm and approachable in the handling of staff. Shorthand useful, 60 wpm typing. Please call now on

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THE TIMES Crème 12-14 JUNE THE EXCLUSIVE SECRETARY SHOW

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Name _____ Position _____
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I am interested in ☐ exhibiting ☐ visiting (please tick).

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For a small but growing retail property company, 5 mins from Green Park station, a capable, dynamic first class secretary is required. First class skills, sense of humour and the ability to be a team player are essential.
Hours: 9.30am to 5.30pm
Salary: £18,000 pa
Please fax CV to Red Fern on 0171 321 0839
NO AGENCIES

**SECRETARY /
RECEPTIONIST**
Friendly and lively personality required for small, dynamic firm of West End Shorthand Writers. 50 - 60 wpm (Word for Windows). Good telephone manner essential. Previous experience advantageous. Send full CV confidentially to: Rubie Lundy, 22 Old Bond Street, London W1X 4RY or fax: 0171 483 8547. Ref: LC

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OFFICE CO-ORDINATOR & PA TO
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High-growth, Westminster based management consultancy needs an exceptional candidate:
- mature and flexible with initiative
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CV with references to: Opta Consulting, 4th Floor, Artillery House, Artillery Row, London SW1P 1RT

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£18,500 + EXC BENS**
This large City based plc requires a pro-active secretary for two senior managers. The position will demand excellent interpersonal, administrative and secretarial skills. You must have good shorthand of 80wpm+, audio and a high standard of wordprocessing including Windows and spreadsheet packages. Please call today for more details.
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116 High Holborn, London WC1V 6RD
Telephone: 0171 404 1010
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An EXPERIENCED AUDIO SECRETARY is required for our busy office based in Holborn.
The job involves mainly Audio Typing of letters, forms and patent specifications (Wordperfect for Windows 6.0) and is varied and interesting. Candidates should have fast accurate keyboard skills (60wpm minimum) and be able to work under pressure as there are deadlines to meet. Past experience preferred. Hours 9.15am to 5.15pm.
Excellent benefits include: Competitive Salary, BUPA, profit-related pay, Pension Scheme, STL and 20 Days Holiday (rising with length of service to 25).
If you think you could make a valuable contribution to our team, please send your date CV to:
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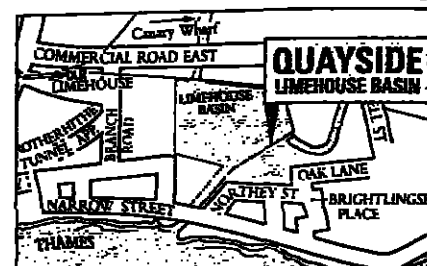
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Cheap at the price: Le Moulin de Ribelon (left), an 18th-century olive mill an hour from Nice, is available for £366,000; Chalet Brame, just outside the Alpine playground of Méribel, is on sale for £2.2 million



Why prices are still dropping in France

Rachel Kelly says that although the market is in recession, there are bargains about

Optimism has returned to the British property market, but the French market is still firmly in recession. Houses are not selling, buyers are not buying, and prices are falling.

The woe began in 1990. First the stories in the British press of dreams realised in the Dordogne and Provence began to dry up. Then the British exodus to France turned from a flood to a trickle. Finally, sales slowed and prices began to fall.

They are now, on average, 25 per cent lower than their 1990 peak. Tales of price drops between 30 to 40 per cent are common currency among expatriates and many are rueing the day they signed the *acte de vente*.

"France is still in the teeth of a recession," says Frank Rutherford, of Rutherford's, a Fulham agent which specialises in French property. The French market is roughly 18 months behind that of Britain.

Mr Rutherford estimates that there are now about 2,000 new British buyers in France a year, compared with 18,000 at the height of the boom in the late 1980s. The number of British estate agents specialising in French property has declined from about 300 at the height of the boom to 20.

Yet record numbers are crossing the Channel. Eurostar has increased the number of trains to Paris to 13 a day since January. Half a million people a year travel by air and by train to France every month, compared with a third of a million a year ago. Many more go by ferry — nearly 18 million went over last year.

So, with the increased traffic and better transport why are there not more buyers? "The problem is that Britons want to buy on the western side of France — in Normandy, Charente, the Dordogne, Brittany and the Loire," Mr Rutherford says. "And the southwest of France is a long drive from Calais, where Eurostar crosses the Channel. It is easier for them to go by ferry. Eurostar has not had as much of an effect as the pundits had predicted. It really has only helped the market in the Pas de Calais."

Nor have improved transport links been enough to counter the impact of a strong French franc — £1 is now worth FF7.7. Of course this means that prices are more expensive for a British purse, but agents stress that this has often been more than offset by price falls. Bargains, they say, abound.

"There is a two-tier market going on," Mr Rutherford says. "Good properties do find buyers. People who need to sell are discounting very heavily."

Knight Frank reports dramatic price cuts in the South of France. Patrick Dring, from the agents'

international department, says: "There is a growing trend for sellers to drop their prices to face the reality of a 'franc fort' head-on."

"Frustrated buyers will be able to see houses at affordable, or even bargain, prices. The reductions will be more than compensate for the strength of the franc and will ultimately kickstart the market

through Knight Frank. The property has a drawing room, vaulted dining room, wine cellar, master bedroom suite and two further bedrooms suites and a study. The three-quarters of an acre grounds includes a stone cottage.

Marouaie is another Knight Frank house on sale, close to the village of Mougins next to the

and famous. The chalet, which is owned by the British businessman Peter Scott, has eight bedrooms and seven bathrooms. The vast main reception area has full-length picture windows which look south over one of Méribel's best-known landmarks, the 2,600-metre Mont Vallon, providing breathtaking views from dawn until dusk. It is for sale for £2.2 million, a cut from £2.6 million in May last year.

There is much to appeal to British tastes in the resort with its huge skiing domain in the so-called 'Trois Vallées' of Méribel, Courchevel and Val Thorens. Chel-sea-in-the-Alps, as it is known, was founded by the British before the Second World War.

The French victories in the Winter Olympics of 1936 stimulated a vogue for skiing in France which focused attention on the possibility of developing new ski resorts," says Sir Edward Tomkins, an early investor. Other owners have included the racing driver Alain Prost, who built himself a house in the resort recently, and the late President of France, François Mitterrand. The pop star Peter

"There is a growing trend for sellers to drop their prices to face the reality of a 'franc fort' head-on"

back into life. Even if the franc devalues, it will be some time before the market readjusts."

For those who still want to buy, agents do have bargains to whet Francophile appetites.

Le Moulin de Ribelon, an 18th-century olive mill in the medieval village of Bargemon, an hour from Nice and close to the Alpes-Maritimes, has been reduced by 30 per cent since it went on sale in 1992. It is now on sale for £366,000

Cannes-Mougins golf course. There are three reception rooms, a master bedroom suite, four further bedrooms, and a staff flat. There is a three-bedroom guest cottage, swimming pool and barbecue area. It is for sale for £1.1 million, a 30 per cent drop in price.

Chalets throughout the French Alps have seen similar falls. Le Chalet Brame is an enormous chalet a kilometre outside Méribel, the Alpine playground of the rich

Gabriel spent five weeks in the resort last season.

Chalet owners should beware of high central heating bills. That at Chalet Brame is about £200 a month. The usual form is for owners to let their chalets out during the skiing season, either in a long-key way through classified advertisements in the ski magazines, or by letting the chalet to a tour operator. The key names in Méribel are Simply Ski and Meri Ski.

Be it a southern mill or an Alpine chalet, buyers should more than beware, agents say. Mr Rutherford says that those who have really suffered in the recession are the dreamers. About a third of those selling are linked to money problems or business failures. Sometimes it is the château that gives them away. More often it is the vineyard. Sometimes they do not speak a word of French.

"Some have spent too much buying and renovating their period stone farmhouse in the Lot or the Dordogne and could not afford the mortgage payments," Mr Rutherford says. "Or perhaps the business sideline they counted on — bed and breakfast for passing Brits, for example — has proved a mirage."

Either way, many have come unstuck. A new generation of buyers has been warned.

● The French Property Show, from March 22-24, is at Horticultural Hall One at Vincent Square, Westminster (£3 per person, £5 per couple, children free). Forty agents and developers from France are showing their wares. Times: Friday 11am-6pm, Saturday 10.30am-6pm, Sunday 11am-5pm.

Buyers turn to spying

More and more house-hunters are consulting private investigators before they make their move. Why? Because buyers are terrified of inheriting nightmare neighbours.

Peter Heims, of the Association of British Investigators, who has been a private investigator since 1953, says: "This is not a new phenomenon. But I've definitely had a rise in inquiries of this type recently. Over the past 12 months alone I've had about six requests for surveillance, which might not sound much, but with more than 10,000 private investigators in Britain, that does mount up."

Keith Richards is legal adviser for the Consumers' Association. "With increasing media coverage of problems caused by noisy neighbours, there is little surprise that there has been a corresponding increase in buyers wanting to find out what they're going to be letting themselves in for before they move," he says.

Buyers are right to be concerned about new neighbours. Mr Heims says: "The majority of cases nothing is uncovered. But about 5 per cent of investigations reveal real problems which make the client reconsider the property."

Civil rights and consumer groups have condemned the snooping. But Mr Heims says: "It is commonsense to check out your neighbours. Why shouldn't buyers have the right to check who they're going to be living next door to?"

Mr Richards says: "The law isn't tough enough on noisy neighbours and there are inadequate laws to protect people from nuisance neighbours. If the law was tougher, people wouldn't be forced to do this in the first place."

Investigators check records such as electoral rolls to find former inhabitants. They are usually better sources than existing neighbours. Other sources include criminal records, career histories, financial details, interviews with the milkman, postman and paper-boy. This trawl will add about £200 to the cost of house purchase, although some buyers are prepared to pay up to £1,000 for noise monitoring and surveillance. But Mr Richards says: "Buyers and sellers worried about problem neighbours should contact their solicitors for advice."

TARA HYLAND

LONDON PROPERTY

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Wimbledon seeking smooth Cup passage

By Russell Kempson

IF REPUTATIONS are anything to go by, the FA Cup quarter-final replay at Selhurst Park tonight represents a culture clash of cataclysmic proportions. Chelsea, the smooth aristocrats from the King's Road, against Wimbledon, the rough-and-ready rebels without a home, let alone a cause. Artists against artisans: good versus evil; Beauty and the Beast.



In reality, it will be nothing of the sort. Chelsea have earned multiple glowing references this season, with Ruud Geulit at the heart of every patient, thoughtful approach, every incisive, flowing move. Yet the brave new world of Glenn Hoddle, the manager, has shown signs of wear and

tear in recent weeks, with only one victory achieved in six matches in the FA Carling Premiership.

Wimbledon's traditional "well-show-tem" attitude remains entrenched in the psyche of any player who pulls on a blue-and-yellow jersey. It will never change. Yet they, too, have refined their style, only reverting to type when all else fails.

They dominated much of the first meeting, which finished 2-2 at Stamford Bridge, and were judged by many as unfortunate to need a second attempt.

The goal in Premiership points and places may be great — Chelsea have 44 and are ninth, Wimbledon have 27 and are seventeenth — but the gap may prove almost non-existent this evening.

With a bumpy, threadbare

pitch to play on, a frenetic atmosphere and the prize of a semi-final against Manchester United at stake, cool heads rather than clever feet will be more appropriate.

"The League is still more important to us," Kenny Cunningham, the Wimbledon defender, said. "It's no good going down Wembley Way after finding yourself in the Endleigh [Insurance] League."

"It's a one-off game and we can't really afford to be over-cautious. We'll chuck everything we can at them and see what happens."

Wimbledon have trod the same path in their three previous ties, drawing away with Watford, Middlesbrough and Huddersfield Town before winning the replay.

The likely loss of Dean Holdsworth up front, after he sustained an ankle injury in the 3-0 home defeat by Arsenal on Saturday, should be counter-balanced by the return of the underrated yet influential Oyvind Leonhardsen, after suspension, in midfield.

Much will depend on Leonhardsen's stifling of Geulit, who is expected to have recovered from the bout of flu that forced him to miss the 2-0 defeat at Liverpool in the Premiership at the weekend.

Though Chelsea have learnt to live without the elegant Dutchman, during his occasional absences, his presence is vital. Dennis Wise always supplies energy and enthusiasm but needs the calm, complementary skills of Geulit alongside him to be truly effective.

"I hope we've learnt from the mistakes of the first game," Wise, the Chelsea captain, said. "After going 2-1 up, we were very disappointed not to finish the job. I'm sure we'll do better and can show what we're really capable of this time around."

Thomas convinces doubters

Peter Ball profiles a player who has revived a flagging career at Anfield

Seven years ago, a goal by Michael Thomas in the dying seconds of the season denied Liverpool their second FA Cup and League double. Now, after a long spell in the Anfield wilderness, he is playing a key role as Liverpool again chase both honours. They are a handy third in the FA Carling Premiership and have an FA Cup quarter-final replay against Leeds United tonight.

Thomas's return to centre stage is the stuff of fairy-tales. Less than six months ago, he was still surplus to Liverpool's requirements and apparently on his way to Atalanta. The Italians could not organise the finances, though, and Thomas stayed — another player, it seemed, who had failed to fulfill the promise of his thrilling early years. Five months on, he is enjoying his best spell since his £1.5 million move to Anfield from Arsenal in 1991 and is discussing a new three-year contract.

The intervening years have been frustrating. Even Arsenal's second championship in 1991 was not an unalloyed pleasure. Thomas, who enjoys passing the ball, found the long-ball system employed by George Graham less and less fulfilling, and he said so.

"When he [Graham] first came, we played through midfield, but then he changed it," Thomas said, "which was why I was a bit critical. A few players wanted to say the same thing, but they couldn't. He always knew my views though."

Liverpool, with their emphasis on passing, seemed to offer the ideal option for Thomas, but he arrived as a Graeme Souness signing at a time of upheaval and his career was hindered by a series of injuries. When Roy Evans took over as manager, his future at the club appeared limited.

"It comes down to people's views on you as a player," Thomas said. "I wasn't getting a chance. I was playing one game and then being left



Thomas brings industry and invention to his role in the Liverpool midfield

out again, even if I'd done well. That was the hurtful part."

When Jason McAteer was signed in the autumn, Thomas's future looked even bleaker. McAteer had said he wanted to play in central midfield, as he had for Bolton Wanderers, but when he settled at wing back and Jamie Redknapp was injured, Thomas came in and took his chance.

His athleticism means that, as well as acting as John Barnes's chauffeur to and from training, he also does

some of his running for him on the field too. Some think that Barnes is not the only Liverpool player to benefit from Thomas's introduction, Thomas moving the ball on quicker than Redknapp.

"Make it simple, make it quick," was Arthur Rowe's precept for the Tottenham Hotspur push-and-run side of the early Fifties and Liverpool have always preached simplicity. "It's all about two-touch, really, pass and move," Thomas said, "and, if you have ability, it should come easy."

It looks as if it does come easily, but that disguises Thomas's ability and his intelligent reading of the game, as he showed when temporarily filling in as one of the three centre backs recently.

"We've used him in some odd positions, but he adapts very quickly and very well," Evans said. "He's not bad at getting the ball, which is always an asset, he's liable to come up with a goal, he works hard alongside John Barnes and he gives us stability. On current form, you couldn't leave him out."

Cantona's contribution critical for United

By Peter Ball

FRANCE have no room for Eric Cantona at the moment. Manchester United, by contrast, are looking to him to lead their pursuit of Newcastle United in the FA Carling Premiership. Kevin Keegan's men having regained top spot by beating West Ham United 3-0 at St James' Park on Monday, The Manchester side will return to the top if they beat Arsenal by two goals at Old Trafford tonight.

Goalscoring has proved Manchester United's Achilles' heel in recent weeks, the team failing to turn a series of golden chances into goals. It cost them two points on Saturday. "We can't keep missing these chances," Alex Ferguson, their manager, said yesterday.

The one consistent goalscorer of late has been Cantona. "Eric is playing his best football of the season," Ferguson said. "He is scoring vital goals, he is looking like scoring all the time and that is important to us."

Tonight, Nicky Butt and Phil Neville return in a game that, traditionally, has always been tight, though perhaps it will not be as tight as Liverpool's meeting with Leeds United in their FA Cup quarter-final replay threatens to be, if the dire first match, at Elland Road, is anything to go by.

"I honestly don't know how Leeds will approach it," Roy Evans, the Liverpool manager, said yesterday. "but it could end up a bit like a European tie. The onus is on us this

time, but, if we go well for leather, we could get caught out."

Manchester City's bid to provide another Georgian to support Georgi Kinkladze received encouragement yesterday when Gordon Taylor, the chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association (PFA), revealed that the PFA would not object to a work permit for Mikhail Kavelashvili, the Spartak Vladikavkaz forward. City hope to sign him before the transfer deadline.



Cantona: consistent scorer

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Griffiths to coach new Welsh rugby league team

By Christopher Irvine

CLIVE GRIFFITHS will be confirmed as coach of the new South Wales rugby league club later this week after his departure from Warrington yesterday. Griffiths, coach of the Wales national team, had been on the coaching staff at Widnespool for eight years.

The appointment of Griffiths, 41, is expected to be confirmed by Mike Nicholas, founder of the second division club, which is meant to capitalise on the interest the Wales team created during the World Cup last year.

With a week to prepare a makeshift side of mainly rugby union recruits, whose only league experience is at amateur and student level, Griffiths has an uphill task. Most home matches will be at Aberavon. Others are proposed for Cardiff rugby union club, with the Arms Park a possible stage for the Wales v England European championship match on June 26.

Griffiths was briefly caretaker-coach at Warrington after Brian Johnson's resignation in January, but was subsequently overlooked when the dual appointment of Alex Murphy and John Dorahy was made. "I have enjoyed my time here, but all good things must come to an end," he said.

There was renewed turmoil in Australia yesterday as a possible compromise between the Australian Rugby League (ARL) and the Super League collapsed. The ARL rejected a proposal to include two clubs from the banned rival competition — Adelaide Rams and Hunter Mariners — in its competition, which starts on Friday.

Super League players and coaches said refusal by the ARL of seven of 15 points they put forward meant they had no alternative but to establish a separate, independently-run competition, ahead of Super League's appeal against a ban until 2000 at the Sydney Federal Court in May.

The Rugby Football League might assist the establishment of a rival league, Wayne Bennett, the Brisbane Broncos' coach, said. "The ARL has behaved unethically and kicked Super League players in the teeth. Naturally, they are indignant and more determined than ever to form their own competition."

Some Super League-aligned ARL clubs could be forced to field under-strength teams. Many leading players have said they will refuse to play in the ARL competition. The ARL would not speculate on whether matches would be forfeited this weekend, but is thought to have drawn up contingency plans.

Struggling Arrows ready for buy-out

TOM WALKINSHAW, the team principal of the Ligier Formula One motor racing team, is set to make his long-awaited move into ownership by completing a buy-out of the struggling Arrows outfit before the end of the season (Oliver Holt writes). It had been thought that Walkinshaw, who, with Flavio Briatore and Ross Brawn, was the architect of Michael Schumacher's world championship win at Benetton in 1994, would enter a new team next season rather than stay with the French team owned by Briatore.

However, it now appears Arrows' financial problems may have presented him with a golden opportunity. As announced in Milton Keynes and run by Jackie Oliver, the former grand prix driver, entered the sport in 1978, but has never won a race.

Bell strikes

Stirling: Graham Bell reaffirmed his status as Britain's leading downhill racer by easily winning the national title on the first day of competition at the British Land national championships in Tignes, France yesterday. On the well-prepared Lognan piste, Bell, 30, left Andrew Freshwater, of Scotland, in second place, 1.17sec behind. Tessa Pirie, 17, of Aberdeen, on her first year in the women's team, won the women's downhill at her first senior championships.

No suspension

Table tennis: Chen Xinhua, 35, the England No.2, has escaped suspension for his showdown with officials at the European Olympic Games trials in Manchester in January and will be allowed to play for Britain in Atlanta this summer. Xinhua failed to leave the court after receiving a red card by the umpire, but, after giving a written apology to the British Olympic Table Tennis Committee, he was told no action would be taken, although he was warned that he was fortunate not to be suspended and that any future outbursts would lead to fines and possible suspension.

Seles injured

Tennis: Monica Seles withdrew from the Lipton championships in Key Biscayne, Florida because of a shoulder injury, tournament officials yesterday. Seles missed this month's event in Indian Wells, California for the same reason. She hurt her left shoulder en route to winning the Australian Open in January.

TODAY'S FIXTURES

Kick-offs 7.30 unless stated

FOOTBALL

European Cup: Quarter-finals, second leg. Ajax (2) v Borussia Dortmund (0) ... 7.30. Juventus (0) v Real Madrid (1) ... 7.30. Panathinaikos (0) v Lazio (0) ... 7.30. Spartak Moscow (0) v Nantes (2) ... 7.30.

FA Cup: Semi-finals. Liverpool v Leeds (7.45). Wimbledon v Chelsea (7.45).

FA Carling Premiership: Bolton v Tottenham (7.45). Man Utd v Arsenal (8.00). Southampton v Sheffield Wednesday (8.00). Endersleigh Insurance League: First division. Birmingham v West Bromwich (7.45). Port Vale v Norwich (7.45).

Bell's Scottish League: Third division. Ayr v East Stirling.

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Aintree holds key to trainers' title

BY JULIAN MUSCAT

AINTRÉE'S recent evolution into a valuable racing festival means there will be much more at stake this year than the Grand National laurels. The destiny of the trainers' championship will almost certainly be settled over the three-day meeting, which starts a week tomorrow.

This coveted accolade appears a straight match between Martin Pipe and David Nicholson. Between them, the pair have harvested the last seven championships, and prize-money levels approaching £1 million will ensure that competition between them, uncompromising at the best of times, has an added significance at Aintree.

Pipe, five times the champion before Nicholson broke the stranglehold three years ago, approaches the meeting with the upper hand. With earnings of £600,000, Pipe has built a lead of more than £50,000 over his perennial adversary. And he has five entrants in the National itself, worth a record £110,000 to the winner this year. Running plans for the quater have yet to be finalised but victory in jump racing's equine lottery would put Pipe out of reach.

Nicholson, for his part, will not be represented in the Martell-sponsored National. Intriguingly, however, the reigning champion trainer is preparing a strong assault on the supporting races. The heart of his challenge rests

with Viking Flagship and Barton Bank, respectively in line for the Mumm Melling Chase and Martell Cup Chase, themselves the two most valuable prizes excepting the National.

Victory in either event would hoist Nicholson to within short change of Pipe, who, having forfeited the lead on opening day at Cheltenham, promptly regained the initiative when Cyborg and Challenger Du Lac triumphed on Gold Cup day. "My prospects of holding on to the title completely depend on how the

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: SUNKALA SHINE (5.20 Towcester)
Next best: Lance Armstrong (3.50 Towcester)

horses perform at Aintree," Nicholson said yesterday.

"There is the odd valuable race after the National, like the Scottish National and the Whitbread, but we need a successful Aintree to have a chance," he continued. "We didn't have a winner at Cheltenham but almost all the horses ran good races. Whatever the outcome, I'll be pleased if they run as well next week. Obviously I'd like to retain the title but the horses come first."

Ground permitting, Nicholson intends to saddle up to 10

runners at Aintree. The going was yesterday reported on the fast side of good by Charles Barnett, the clerk of the course. "It is early days yet but we could do with some rain," he said. "The forecast suggests that some is on the way."

Nicholson is also optimistic that his stable jockey, Adrian Maguire, will recover from the multiple fracture to his right collar-bone in time for the meeting. "We missed Adrian at Cheltenham," he said, "but he will have to start riding out here soon. I'd like to see him prove his fitness on the course before Aintree."

With Pipe certain to campaign his string well beyond Aintree, Nicholson must establish a healthy lead next week if he is to secure his third successive championship. And Pipe's annual domination of the season's latter months suggests that his stable jockey, David Bridgwater, still has a chance of overhauling Tony McCoy in the jockeys' listings.

An 83-1 double at Fontwell yesterday extended McCoy's seasonal tally to 128, representing a lead of 32 over Bridgwater. McCoy is favoured in the betting for the riding championship, although whether he has a sufficient cushion over Bridgwater is debatable. If past events are an accurate guide, Pipe's springtime monopoly might yet tilt the balance towards Bridgwater. In his, their first season in harness.

Royal Athlete retired before defence of Grand National crown



Royal Athlete, winning last season's Martell Grand National (above), has been retired instead of defending his title at Aintree on Saturday week. The decision to retire the 13-year-old, who was a 25-1 chance for this year's renewal, was made at a meeting between his trainer, Jenny Pitman, her son and assistant Mark, and owners Libby and Gary Johnson. In a statement yesterday, Pitman said: "Due to the prolonged spells of frost and

snow, and the fact that we are unable to train him on artificial surfaces, we feel that we would not be able to produce 'Alfie' at Aintree in the condition that we would like. 'Royal Athlete' has been a great ambassador, not only for his owners but for ourselves and he has been enjoyed over the years by a great number of National Hunt supporters. Whilst it leaves us with a feeling of sadness to bring his racing career to an end, we know that this

is the right decision as the welfare of our horses is always uppermost in our minds," Pitman added. Jason Tiley, who crowned his first full season in Britain by winning on the chestnut at Aintree, also paid tribute. "The win changed my life," he said. "The National is probably the most famous race in the world, and gets a lot of publicity." During his career, which spanned eight seasons, Royal Athlete won £223,355 in prize-money.

EXETER

2.10 Tote Bagelle
2.40 Million Prize
3.10 Flow

The Times Private Handicapper's top rating: 4.40 SLINGSBY.
Carl Evans: 4.10 Good For Business.

GOING: GOOD (GOOD TO SOFT IN PLACES) TOTE JACKPOT MEETING SIS

2.10 ROBERT WEBB TRAVEL NOVICES SELLING HURDLE

(£2,094; 2m) (10 runners)
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The weather is terrible, wish you were here

On Radio 4's *Feedback* last week, a listener wrote to complain. In a radio feature about a British flash flood — I didn't catch which one — the producer overheard the song *The Street Where You Live* from *My Fair Lady*. As the correspondent pointed out, many people had died in this flood, and lest we forget, the first lines of *The Street Where You Live* go something like: "I have often walked down this street before / But the pavement always stayed beneath my feet before". The reprimand was certainly in order. But why do I mention it? Because last night, watching the new, staggering *Savage Skies* (ITV) that stupid, stupid song kept humming in my head, as floods in torrential rain lifted houses off their foundations, spun them round slowly and crushed them like paper.

Freak weather is almost guaranteed to make good television. One

of BBC2's most compelling theme nights was its *Weather Night* in 1992 — I watched the whole thing, and wanted more. *Savage Skies* is only four parts; but already that's not enough. Weather is everything, as Ian Holm's doomy narration last night kept explaining. Not many of us can say "meteorology" with any confidence, but we all know what it feels like to get our heads wet. On this planet water is burnt off, it rises, it falls again — and the process can entail skies that are peach or lilac, clouds that are stringy or tall, hailstones that come down like rocks in an avalanche, and every so often, utter devastation.

Last night the subject was clouds and rain, and the stories included the sudden swelling of a river in Colorado in 1976, which destroyed 418 homes. Houses and trucks were "tumbled" along the swollen river, which churned like boiling lava. People were swept away like

litter down a drain: 139 bodies were found. Twenty years later, the survivors were still stunned, still appalled by the memory of their helplessness. Incidentally, they say you never step in the same stream twice, but perhaps that's wrong. The water is always the same stuff recycled: it's been going up and down like a gooseberry in a lift for 4,000 million years. "This water once slaked the thirst of a dinosaur," said Holm. Well, surely that explains all this fancy weather we've been having. After 4,000 million years doing the same thing, no wonder it enjoys a bit of variation.

After strenuously climbing the chronologically ladder of *Our Friends in the North* and finding solid ground somewhere near the present day, we sighed with relief to be in *Skies*, we said, dusting ourselves off, and shaking hands. Little did we know about the big make awaiting

REVIEW



Lynne Truss

us last night when (whoops! not so!) we slithered back down to 1960 for *And the Beat Goes On* (Channel 4). Has anyone got the energy to start again? Personally, when I looked around and saw the milk bars and quilts and that same terrace of fake houses used in *Lipstick on Your Collar*, I put my head in my hands and sobbed.

And *the Beat Goes On* is a curious thing. It's got enough

characters and storylines for a soap opera: it is shot in bright, light colours like a comedy. Yet last night's central story was a family, grim, up-the-duff affair, better suited to a focused drama, with Laurence Harvey smoking doily in the dark in black and white. To cast about for recent point of comparison, *And the Beat Goes On* evoked vivid memories of *Seaford*, the most relentlessly miserable drama series ever made. "More light-hearted than *Seaford*" they could call this, and see how far it gets them.

Not easy to sum up, then. A working-class family competes for our attention with a middle-class family. Both include restless young people, suggesting that a *Romeo and Juliet* story may develop (the series runs eight weeks). Meanwhile Jenny Agutter and Stephen Moore are rather boring characters but, since they are also the closest to identify, we

are grateful whenever they appear. The viewer has lots of fun yelling "We had those curtains!" and so on. The working-class materialism says "I believe you, thousands wouldn't", and "Time flies when you're having fun". It is a shock to realise that such sayings must be considered quaint and historical.

Earlier on Channel 4, in *Without Walls*, the American film critic Joe Queenan had great larks dressing up as Hugh Grant, and affecting an unsteady English accent for a little self-written drama called *My Fair Hugh*. A clunky name for a clunky exercise, this was a *Pygmalion* variant, in which a frank Yank was to be transformed into a hesitant, charming, classy Brit with floppy hair and heart-breaking smile. It must have looked great on paper. Queenan stared dreamily out of a London window: "I'd give anything," he sighed, "to

have an ounce of class just once in my life."

But apart from admirably magicking the word "legendariness" onto television, the result was embarrassingly weak and pointless. Just occasionally Queenan's impersonation was funny enough — when he inserted "bigger" or "excellent" into sentences randomly, or held back a strangle of hair. Queenan is a trenchant and hilarious writer, whose book *If You're Talking To Me, Your Career Must Be In Trouble* has the funniest index of modern times ("Etymology of word Keanu, 239"; "Slater, Christian: annoying eyebrows of 169"; "Scorsese, Martin: surprising ability to keep getting dates, 130"). A guy like that could take British arts television by storm, and perhaps — unhampered by floppy wig — he still will. Anyway, if you see Tony Parsons flicking nervously through a bus timetable, you will guess the reason why.

BBC1

6.00am Business Breakfast (55556)
7.00am BBC Breakfast News (CeeFax) (16827)
9.00am Breakfast News Extra (CeeFax) (6788643)

9.45 Can't Cook, Won't Cook (s) (2101339)
9.50s Killy (s) (8818594)
10.30 Good Morning (s) (99681)

12.00 News (CeeFax), regional news and weather (2052759)
12.05pm Turnabout (s) (5489001)

12.30 Going for a Song (s) (37223)
1.00 One O'Clock News (CeeFax) (19914)
1.30 Regional News and weather (9819551)

1.40 Neighbours (CeeFax) (s) (94969117)
2.00 Peabody Mill (s) (8374855)
2.40 Snowy River — the McGregor Saga (r) (s) (1088594)

3.30 Moomin (6792469) 3.55 Biffa (s) (5768339) 4.10 Rugrats (r) (s) (9831961)
4.35 Out of Time (CeeFax) (s) (2788448)
5.00 Newsround (CeeFax) (3500440)
5.10 Blue Peter (CeeFax) (s) (1127488)

5.35 Neighbours (CeeFax) (s) (972310)
6.00 Six O'Clock News (CeeFax) (223)
6.30 Regional News magazines (575)

7.00 Les Dawson: The Entertainer. Terry Wogan hosts this programme celebrating the funniest moments from 1968 to 1993 in the career of one of Britain's best-loved comedians (r) (CeeFax) (s) (68333)

7.30 Here and Now. Sue Lawley and the team investigate how the money raised by Sinn Féin in America is spent (CeeFax) (s) (759)

8.00 How Do They Do That? Eamonn Holmes and Jenny Hull show how more than five million people have attended laser wizard Jean-Michel Jarre's 23 concerts; how a new suit helped a girl with cerebral palsy to stand tall; and how car testers do old-fashioned driving tests to new cars. Also, Barry Cryer and Nick Revell show Eamonn how to tell a joke (CeeFax) (s) (282827)

8.50 Points of View (348407)
9.00 Nine O'Clock News (CeeFax), regional news and weather (9488)

9.30 Silent Witness: Darkness Visible. Drama series about a forensic pathologist. Dr Ryan's unwillingness to let the law make her a parish among her police colleagues. With Amanda Burton (488489)

10.25 Sportsnight. Introduced by Des Lynam with Alan Hansen. Football: highlights of tonight's FA Cup sixth round replays; ice skating: action from the world championships in Vancouver, Alberta; Olympic feature: a look at Britain's two leading female athletes, Sally Gunnell and Kelly Holmes, as they prepare for this summer's Games (s) (774556)

12.05 FILM: Fire with Fire (1986) starring Craig Sheffer and Virginia Madsen. A boy and girl meet and fall in love but they have a problem. He is an inmate of a reform school and she is a student at a Roman Catholic girls' school. They concoct a plan to escape to a cabin once owned by the boy's father, closely followed by a reform camp guard. Directed by Duncan Gibbons (685711)

1.45am Weather (962006)

VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCode. The numbers on the TV programme listings are Video PlusCode numbers, which allow you to programme your video recorder instantly with a VideoPlus+ remote control. The Video PlusCode programme you wish to record, VideoPlus+ (+), Programme (+) and Video Recorder are trademarks of Gemstar Development Ltd.

For more comprehensive listings of satellite and cable channels, see the Vision supplement, published Saturday

SKY ONE
7.00am Baked Eggs and Soldiers (64843)
8.30 Press Your Luck (581594) 9.00 Court TV (524643) 9.30 Oprah Winfrey 10.40 Jeopardy! (643862) 11.10 Sally Jessy Raphael (685823) 12.00 The Tonight Show (677631) 1.00am Home (78594) 2.00 Garfield (48881) 3.00 Court TV (747440) 3.30 The Oprah Winfrey Show (684740) 4.00 The Tonight Show (677631) 5.00 Sports Illustrated (677631) 5.30 The Tonight Show (677631) 6.00 The Simpsons (53339) 6.30 Jeopardy! (6391) 7.00 LAPD (6049) 7.30 M*A*S*H (5579) 8.00 Sports Illustrated (677631) 8.30 The Tonight Show (677631) 9.00 The Outer Limits (65285) 10.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation (68372) 11.00 M*A*S*H (5579) 12.00 Life Show with David Letterman (279701) 12.45am The Untouchables (491624) 1.20am Diddy Dearest (301179) 2.00am Hit Max Long Play (1152841)

SKY NEWS
News on the hour
6.00am News (8605814) 9.30 Despatches (28391) 10.30 ABC Nightline (27370) 11.00 World News and Business (685823) 1.00am News (8605814) 2.00am News (8605814) 3.00am News (8605814) 4.00am News (8605814) 5.00am News (8605814) 6.00am News (8605814) 7.00am News (8605814) 8.00am News (8605814) 9.00am News (8605814) 10.00am News (8605814) 11.00am News (8605814) 12.00am News (8605814) 1.00am News (8605814) 2.00am News (8605814) 3.00am News (8605814) 4.00am News (8605814) 5.00am News (8605814) 6.00am News (8605814) 7.00am News (8605814) 8.00am News (8605814) 9.00am News (8605814) 10.00am News (8605814) 11.00am News (8605814) 12.00am News (8605814) 1.00am News (8605814) 2.00am News (8605814) 3.00am News (8605814) 4.00am News (8605814) 5.00am News (8605814) 6.00am News (8605814) 7.00am News (8605814) 8.00am News (8605814) 9.00am News (8605814) 10.00am News (8605814) 11.00am News (8605814) 12.00am News (8605814) 1.00am News (8605814) 2.00am News (8605814) 3.00am News (8605814) 4.00am News 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Contract sets clubs against countries

By DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE leading rugby union clubs in England have drawn up a draft contract that would enable them to prevent players from appearing for the national side. The contract would effectively remove any control over players by the Rugby Football Union (RFU).

Though not necessarily the finished article, the document represents the hawkish intent of some clubs and is likely to be discussed when the RFU meets representatives of the clubs at the East India Club in London tomorrow.

Two contentious clauses in the document contravene regulations laid down by the

International Rugby Football Board (IRFB), which determined last September, in the wake of the sport going open, that national unions should have first call on players and no club contract could provide otherwise or impose conditions. This is not dissimilar to football, where Fifa, the world governing body, requires the release of players for international duties.

Yet the duties and obligations of players, as defined by the contract, state that "the player shall not play rugby football [including rugby league] except for the club."

The second duty states that "the player shall not play any representative rugby football for which he may be eligible

... without the prior written consent of a club official."

The inference is clearly to give clubs control over where and when their assets, the players, may be used. Any agreements reached in respect of the RFU or the IRFB, the contract goes on, shall only apply while the club remains affiliated to those bodies. "Should the club for any reason wish to play rugby football on a temporary or permanent basis outside the membership... of the IRFB and/or the RFU... the club's rights regarding registrations, agreements... shall not be affected and shall be enforceable," the contract states.

It will be argued that such provisions are not intended to

The Player shall not play Rugby Football except for the Club

The Player shall not play any representative Rugby Football for which he may be eligible by virtue of nationality, age, residence, educational status or place of birth without the prior written consent of a Club official.

The contentious clauses from the clubs' draft contract

deny players a place in the England team but to reduce the possibility of them being called upon for lesser RFU competitions, such as divisional or county rugby, which the clubs are against. Yet the contract as worded would give clubs the power to remove players from national squad training and, ultimately, international matches. Such action would deny players the exposure they receive for wearing

the national jersey and the commercial benefits that invariably accrue.

The battle for primacy must be swiftly resolved, with the RFU representing not only its own interests but those of other home unions and France, all of whom anticipate a flood of players transferring to English club rugby.

"I don't believe we will get to a situation where a player has to ask permission to play for

England," a leading coach said yesterday, "but a worst-case scenario — say, where the RFU arranges a stack of divisional matches — cannot yet be foreseen. Whoever pays the wages calls the tune and, in five years' time, every first-class club will be fully professional."

Cliff Brittle, the RFU chairman, will meet representatives of the first and second division clubs tomorrow and representatives of the top 40 clubs on March 31. "We will be listening to what the clubs have to say and we will be persuading them that unity with the RFU is the only way forward," Brittle said.

"It is vital to the future of our game that we stay together.

In recent years, a strong and successful England side has attracted millions of people to rugby. We are now in a position to compete globally and we need strong clubs in full support of that."

The agenda tomorrow must also embrace the structure of the season — the RFU has made allowance for European competition next season, but only at one level, whereas the clubs want a two-tier competition — and the financial arrangements for clubs now forced to employ full-time staff on an unprecedented scale.

"We have said all along that we wish to stay under the umbrella of the RFU," Donald Kerr, the chairman of English First Division Clubs Ltd, said.

"There is simply no need for infighting if sense prevails. But what we do ask is that the RFU recognises our situation. All we have done is try and turn ourselves into a professionally-run operation with which we can manage our affairs properly."

Yet the clubs seek agreement for their provisional deal with BSkyB for a two-tier European competition when there are already outstanding agreements, to which the RFU was party, with ITV and Heineken, whose investment in Europe was made with an eye to an expanding future rather than this season alone. Something will have to give.

Women role, page 43

Lewis's pursuit of Tyson leaves no time for Bruno

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

THE future of Frank Bruno remained clouded with uncertainty yesterday after his crushing defeat by Mike Tyson, but one fact emerged with increasing clarity: Lennox Lewis is unlikely to be a part of it.

As Bruno, deprived of the World Boxing Council (WBC) heavyweight championship in less than three rounds at the weekend, went away to reflect on where the defeat left his career, Lewis's financial backer, Panos Eliades, had appeared to be considering a possible rematch with Bruno.

However, Frank Maloney, Lewis's manager, said on Radio 5 Live yesterday: "Bruno has had his chance. I would say for Lennox Lewis to consider fighting Frank Bruno is a backward step."

"Unless the money is so good that he could not refuse it, I can't see him wanting to take that fight again, knowing

how it ended last time and seeing the sort of performance Bruno put up at the weekend. Bruno has nowhere to go now in the heavyweight division."

Lewis, the British former holder of the WBC championship title and once the Olympic champion, defeated Bruno in Cardiff in 1993 when their bout was stopped in the seventh round by the referee.

A judge in the United States has ordered Tyson to make the first defence of his crown against Lewis and Tyson has spoken of his desire to box in Britain, which he described as "my second home."

Lewis said: "I hope Mike [Tyson] is going to honour the judge's decision. If he tries to run away, it can only mean he is scared."

With another avenue appearing to close on Bruno, the clarion call for him to retire at the age of 34 were gaining strength. Yet the deposed

champion remained undecided. "My dream has always been to retire from boxing in front of a home crowd — a winner rather than a loser," he was reported as saying.

"There are many things to consider, but any report that I have quit is pure fiction. I have no concrete plans."

Bruno revealed that Don King, the American promoter, had offered to stage another world heavyweight championship bout involving him.

"King's offer is a serious one and I will be giving it a lot of thought. It would be one of the other versions of the title," Bruno said. Meanwhile, he has been offered an immediate opportunity to contest the British heavyweight championship by the champion, Scott Welch, who is based in Brighton. An upbeat Welch, who overcame the challenge of Joe Bugner in six rounds at the weekend, said: "I am handing Frank a marvellous opportunity to say goodbye to his army of fans by having a shot at my title."

"It will be his chance to bow out on home turf, although it won't be as a winner. I have sparred with Frank in the past and know I would do a similar job on him to the one Tyson did."

Some experts remain unsure about whether Tyson, the former undisputed world champion, is yet back to full strength. Lou Duva, who has helped to train several champions in the United States, said: "Bruno didn't throw any punches. If you look close, Tyson was all elbows and forearms against him. I want to see when he gets hit on the chin what happens."

Richie Woodhall, from Telford, was confident yesterday that he would still be offered the chance to challenge for the WBC middleweight championship despite the defeat of Quincy Taylor by his challenger for the title, Keith Holmes, in Las Vegas at the weekend. Woodhall, the European champion, is the mandatory WBC challenger.

Ito delights in impressive comeback



Midori Ito, of Japan, delights a crowd of 7,000 at the ice skating world championships in Edmonton on Monday night. Returning to international competition after a four-year break, Ito won qualifying group B to underline her gold medal claims. Now 26, Ito retired after winning the silver medal at the 1992 Winter Olympic Games, saying that she had "burnt out". She remains one of only two women — the other is Tonya Harding — to perform a triple axel in a world championship. Ito was drawn to skate first on Monday, normally considered a disadvantage, but

after a nervous start, in which she stepped out of a triple axel and a triple salchow, she completed four other triple jumps. Second in Ito's group was Tara Lipinski, 13, of the United States, with Kristina Czak, of Hungary, third. Stephanie Main, of Britain, qualified in twelfth position. Leading the qualifiers in group A was Maria Butyrskaya, of Russia, the silver medal-winner at the European championships, with Yulia Vorobieva, of Azerbaijan, second and Tanja Szewczenko, of Germany, third.

British shortcomings, page 46

Lomu flirts with plan to retire

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

JONAH LOMU, the New Zealand rugby union wing, said yesterday that he had thought about quitting the game to escape the pressures of media scrutiny, but had decided against it.

It was not a good day for the emotional player. He broke down in tears in a Wellington television studio as he said that his decision to exclude his parents from his secret marriage at the weekend was the hardest thing he had done and he also apologised for an incident with a television reporter.

Asked about reports that he was considering retirement, Lomu said quitting the game was "just a thought and that is all it was... I am not leaving rugby. I definitely know that."

Lomu, 20, said it was hard to explain the pressure he had been under since becoming rugby's most recognisable sporting face after his feats at the 1995 World Cup. "Every port I stop off at, apart from the States, I just don't have time to myself. Everybody's always confronting me for different reasons... I just need a little bit of space sometimes."

Lomu, who was born in Tonga, said being away from his family for extended periods made it difficult for him. "I can't concentrate on the rugby itself. All I want to do is put my head down and work on my game. I love my rugby. It's the No 1 reason why I stay with rugby. I love the people of

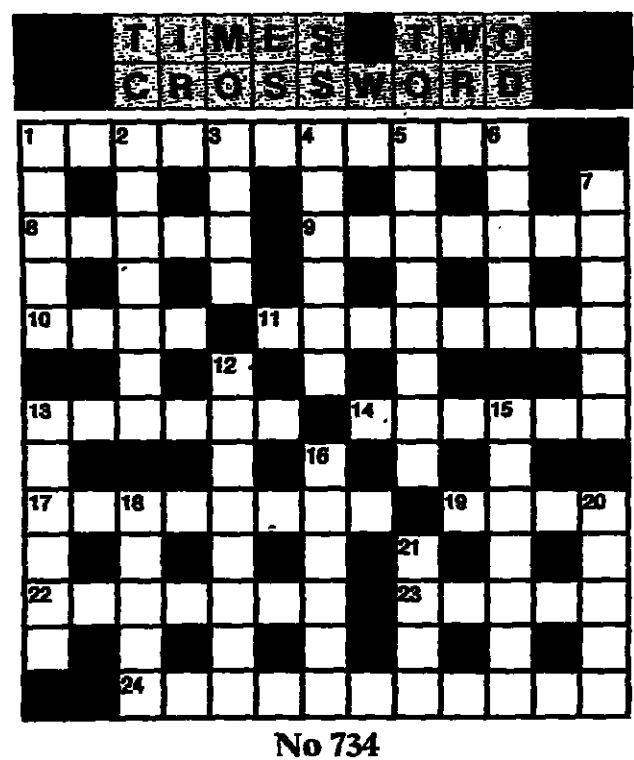
New Zealand itself, but I do need the space."

Lomu married his South African girlfriend, Tanya Rutter, 19, whom he met at the World Cup, in a civil ceremony on Sunday. When a Television New Zealand reporter, Kate Hawkesby, approached Lomu at training yesterday for confirmation of the wedding, Lomu swore and said: "Why don't you get a life, mate?" Later, Lomu angrily slapped away the television crew's microphone and camera as he got into a car.

Asked if he regretted the incident, Lomu replied: "I do. It was spur of the moment. I just lost it."

Told that his mother was very upset at being excluded from the wedding, Lomu choked back tears to say: "I am, too. She's the woman I brought me on to this earth and not to have her there was just the hardest thing. I felt they didn't really want me to do it. I was scared they wouldn't let me do it, but I found I was the legal age."

Phil Kingsley-Jones, Lomu's manager, told Radio New Zealand that the media's treatment of Lomu's marriage was the final straw. "The pressure is just too much, he can't have a life of his own. He's prepared to walk away from everything," he said. "He just feels he's living in a goldfish bowl and he can't handle it. He's really at a stage at the moment where he's prepared to chuck it all in. It's just too much for him."



- ACROSS**
- Young journalist (3,8)
 - Imitation jewellery; adjective (5)
 - Ir. county: fictional detective (7)
 - Money owed (4)
 - Worn by racehorses, by the narrow-minded (8)
 - Economist; other half of Milton (6)
 - Call (eg honesty) into question (6)
 - Scattering (of Jewry) (8)
 - Pulp; sled dog command (4)
 - A parachuted supply (7)
 - Sauernes vineyard (5)
 - Rumpled (11)

- SOLUTION TO NO 733**
- ACROSS:** 1 Approach 5 Spat 9 Probe 10 Taurean 11 Iceberg 12 Tinge 13 Beveridge 18 Pager 20 Chatel 22 Ezekiel 23 Bonus 24 Plite 25 Symmetry
- DOWN:** 1 Au pair 2 Proverb 3 Obese 4 Categorically 6 Pagan 7 Turned 8 Guted 14 Vermin 15 Extinct 16 Upkeep 17 Glossy 19 Ghent 21 Album

SOLUTION TO TIMES TWO CROSSWORD 729

- ACROSS:** 1 Crossroads 9 Abyssmal 10 Down 11 Rail 12 Brouhaha 14 Bygone 15 Placid 18 Encroach 20 Coma 22 Dunce 23 Classic 24 Heavy metal
- DOWN:** 2 Rome 3 Salary 4 Redoubt 5 Aloha 6 Song and dance 7 Hair's breadth 8 Hyping 13 Unlovely 16 Choosy 17 Icicle 19 Conga 21 Lama

1st PRIZE of a return ticket travelling economy class to anywhere on BRITISH MIDLAND's domestic or international network is J A Kent, Romby, Liverpool.

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Montgomery gains from losing

John Hopkins and Bill Elliott on how Europe's No 1 has shed a heavy burden

Forty years ago, a fat American began dieting and became the best golfer the world has seen in modern times. Now, a fat European has begun the same weight-reducing process with the express aim of winning major championships.

Colin Montgomery has fewer pounds to lose than Jack Nicklaus did all those years ago. Furthermore, Montgomery's image and hairstyle have not contributed to a nickname as unpleasant as Nicklaus's at that time — Blob O. Although an acerbic American journalist once said that there was not a fairway wide enough for Montgomery and John Daly to walk up side by side, no one has done to Montgomery what they did to Nicklaus when he was at his least popular and stood in the rough holding up a sign saying "hit it here, fat boy."

Montgomery, nonetheless, feels that to win more he has to eat less. He lost 30lb during the winter and his reward was to win the Dubai Desert Classic last Sunday, his first

tournament after a lengthy winter break and, as a result, move to second in the world rankings. His target is to lose at least another seven pounds.

"I miss the chips, the pizzas and the rest, but I have been able to be disciplined because I have been at home for three months," Montgomery said yesterday at the Forest of Arden course, where he revealed he is to play in the English Open this year and the next two as well. "The fact is I've been putting on seven pounds a year for some time now and I just decided it was time it had to stop. I want to lose another half-stone before I start eating normally again."

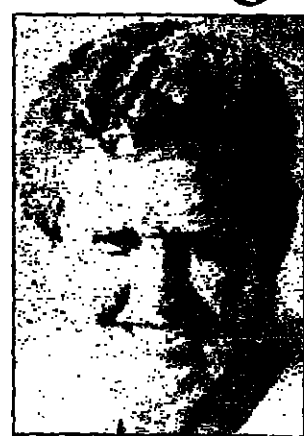
Montgomery, who has always appeared to be supremely confident, said he is even more so now that he has started to count his calories as well as his birdies. "I was already confident after finishing No 1 in Europe last season for the third time in success-

tion, but losing the weight added to it," he said.

"I just feel more comfortable and confident about my appearance now, not that I was embarrassed before, but the truth is I wasn't happy with my image, particularly some of the pictures taken when it's been very hot. Now I have a generally enhanced sense of well-being," Montgomery explained.

The local Oxford shop near Montgomery's home should have not only a sense of well-being, but also hundreds of shirts, sweaters and trousers that have been cast out by the new slimline golfer. This creates a wonderful mental image of someone who has no idea of how to play the game wearing the clothes that once belonged to one of the game's best players.

Nicklaus lost weight and grew his hair, in part in an attempt to work his way into the affection of the American



Montgomery: 30lb lighter

public, which, hitherto, had given his heart to Arnold Palmer. He achieved this and won 18 major titles as a professional.

Montgomery would be satisfied with, rather less. So far, he has none, though he lost only in play-offs in two recent major championships. He hopes to become the latest player to discover that by spending less time at the dinner table, he will acquire more trophies to put on it.

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